THEOSOPHY AND THE NEW PSYCHOLOGY

BY

ANNIE BESANT

1904

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FOREWORD

These lectures are published as they were delivered, at the request of many who had heard them. They are merely a popular treatment of a large subject, but may prove useful to some who are repelled by more technical expositions. They were intended to induce the hearers to use theosophical teachings as a guide - or at least as working hypotheses - in their study of Psychology, for every theosophical student knows how useful Theosophy proves in arranging into some kind of order the chaos of facts presented by modern psychologists. Theosophy in modern Psychology is truly as a lamp in a dark place, as all who are willing to use it will find.

ANNIE BESANT

London, 1904.

THE LARGER CONSCIOUSNESS

Psychology has travelled far during the last forty years: Some forty years ago it was accepted on almost all sides of the scientific world that, in order to follow safely psychological studies, you must base your psychology on physiology. Now there is a truth in that, which I do not want to overlook; that you cannot deal accurately and fully with consciousness without knowing some thing of the nature of its instruments. But the sense in which that famous sentence was uttered was false, if it meant that psychology grew out of physiology, that mind grew out of matter, that consciousness was the result of the mechanical arrangement of matter, and that therefore, in tracing the workings of the mind, we must start with a thorough understanding of the brain and nervous system. Far have we gone since that day, and what I have called the New Psychology is the psychology that holds its mind open to all new facts and truths; that is not content to march along a beaten track; that is willing to consider facts the most abnormal, provided only they are demonstrated to the reason; understanding that in psychology, as elsewhere, the fact which seems to be the most abnormal, which most seems to fly in the face of knowledge already acquired, is the fact that is most likely to be of value, that is most likely to act as a signpost along the hitherto undiscovered road. That, of course, is admitted in most scientific investigations, but somehow people seem to have shrunk from it in the science of the mind, where, if anywhere, abnormal effects are likely to be the most significant. But the New Psychology walks with its eyes open; it does not reject methods because they are new, nor facts because they are unknown. Granted, it is a little inclined to re-baptise the facts, that sometimes, along the lines of the New Psychology this tendency shows itself somewhat prominently, as will be seen in one of the cases to which I shall allude in a moment, where an ancient and well-known fact has just been admitted into scientific society under a new baptismal name. For the moment, however, let me give my reason for coupling Theosophy and the New Psychology. Theosophy, having a theory of life and of consciousness based on a very wide and very ancient investigation of nature, is able to offer to the New Psychology a theory of which it stands somewhat sadly in need. I say "a theory", because it can only be accepted as a theory, as a hypothesis, so far as the scientific world is for the moment concerned. If there is presented to that world a theory in which the facts acknowledged as true all find their places; if the theory offers a rational explanation for facts otherwise inexplicable; if it offers a rational solution for problems that otherwise remain unsolved; then it may surely be accepted as dealing with the facts, and held for the time until some better explanation and solution are forthcoming.

Now the New Psychology is terribly in need of a theory under which its facts can be arranged. For you must remember that the stage of hypothesis is a recognised stage in all scientific investigations. After many facts have been collected and to some extent co-ordinated a generalisation arises out of the co-ordinated facts, and our scientific teachers put forward a hypothesis based on the facts which suggest the generalisation. They then make that hypothesis the basis for further experiment, finding experiment more likely to be fruitful when it starts along lines definitely determined. If the new experiments do not strengthen and confirm the hypothesis, it is thrown aside; but if it is confirmed by them, the hypothesis gradually passes into the realm of the definite and acknowledged teachings of science. I am only claiming the position of a reasonable hypothesis for that which Theosophy lays down with regard to the facts accumulated by the New Psychology, but I do not mean that I hold it as a hypothesis myself. To pretend that would be to deceive you. I hold it as knowledge, not as hypothesis; but I present it to you as a hypothesis for you to re-examine and accept or reject.

Now, that there is a larger consciousness in man is a fact which is being asserted by so many, which is supported by evidence so wide and multifarious, that one is almost inclined to say that the fact is beyond dispute. Some will think this is going too far, yet I doubt if you will find many amongst those who look into the experiments, who carefully weigh the testimony, who are not prepared to say that, while they cannot perhaps explain and hesitate to assert, yet they cannot but admit that the evidence for a consciousness wider than the ordinary brain-consciousness is touching on the overwhelming. Sir Oliver Lodge has put forward his belief in

very clear terms. He regards it as definitely established that our consciousness is much larger than the consciousness which manifests through the brain; that outside and beyond what we know normally as consciousness there exists a great tract to which no name save the name of consciousness can rationally be given - part of ourselves, perhaps the most important part of ourselves, inasmuch as there come whirling down from that unknown field of consciousness statements so clear and definite, commands so imperious and compelling, that they overbear the reason and mould conduct even against the logic of the human mind. That there is such a larger field of consciousness he definitely asserts; of its existence he is definitely convinced. Or if we take such statements as those in the book of the late Mr. Myers, on *Human Personality*, you are confronted there with an accumulation of facts and evidence which it is impossible lightly to put on one side. Two things especially strike us in looking at that remarkable work. One, that the name given by Mr. Myers to this consciousness is awkward, unsuitable. One wishes sometimes that he had used a clearer name, asserting his belief in a consciousness definitely higher than the brain-consciousness. And yet in reading Mr. Myers' book, I cannot believe his abstinence from such a statement was due to any mental cowardice on his part. For when I remember that he asserted the probability of the truth of obsession, of the taking possession of the body by an alien and often hostile intelligence, and when he added that this brought us bark to the belief of the savage, so brave a statement seems to me to put entirely out of court the notion that he shrank from the assertion of the Spirit in man from any kind of mental fear. Some reason he had for not speaking more definitely. Personally it seems to me due to mental confusion; that is, that he had a mass of facts he could not arrange, could not understand, could not explain. He could mark them off as dreams, as genius, as phantasms, and so on, but he had no theory which made them fall into a coherent and sequential view of human consciousness. Over and over again, in reading the book, I found myself saying: "Oh! if Mr. Myers had only taken the opportunity he once had, and had become a Theosophist." You will say: "Yes, because you yourself are a Theosophist." Perhaps so. None the less; I find that when one reads that book in the light of Theosophy, one can answer every question that he could not answer, and show the explanation of facts which left him absolutely bewildered. This confusion falls into order when the theosophical theory is accepted, even if only temporarily, as a hypothesis; and if he had arranged his facts into an order based upon that, he would not have confounded the madman and the genius, the lumber-room and the source of human inspiration. That is one of the points I hope to deal with in the forthcoming lectures.

And another point I must mention is that Mr. Myers left out the very strongest part of his case - that which comes from the study of the religions of the world, and the testimony of mystics of every faith. Why? He did it deliberately, I presume, because he did not wish to bring into clash the ordinary science and the religions of the time, because he feared lest science would listen less attentively if he went into the dangerous regions of the mystic and the visionary. But in shrinking from these facts, he left the study of human consciousness incomplete. The testimony of the mystic to his own experiences, the testimony of the religious man to the facts of his own consciousness, the visions of the Sufi, of the Yogi, of the Christian Saint, are as much facts of consciousness as any that you can gather from the records of the hypnotises, any you can find in the recorded phenomena of hysteria; and it seems to me that Myers, in leaving them out, shrank from the most effective evidences of the larger consciousness which he desired so earnestly to establish. For, as a matter of fact, it is in those facts of consciousness that the highest reaches of the human consciousness are to be seen, as James has quite truly recognised. And Myers, in his psychology, despite his exclusion of these, has offered in the very evidence that he has collected the justification for the religious theory, and has begun to build the foundation of a science on which the beliefs of religion will hereafter be erected.

Turn from his book to the evidence for the Larger Self. I will take first in order, what we call premonitions and intuitions, because they are so widely spread. They range from the heavy sense of gloom which hints at an impending and unknown disaster, or at some sorrow that is coming to us across the world, whose news has not come to us by the slower methods of ordinary science - they range from those vague impressions to the

clear sight of what are now called phantasms of the living and of the dead. Now those premonitions and intuitions, those suggestions to us of a wider consciousness than the brain normally responds to, whence do they come? how do they reach us? how do they impress us? what part of our organism is it which is the organ for their sensing? These questions naturally arise, and we shall be able, I think, to give some answer to them when we study the mechanism of consciousness. It is only with the *fact* of their occurring that I am concerned at the moment - and how many among you can bear your own personal testimony to the fact of their happening. How many of you can find amongst your friends and acquaintances some who have received such premonitions, dimly or clearly. An ever-increasing amount of testimony to them comes forward, as they are regarded with less and less ridicule by educated and cultured people. We have, then, in the very first rank of our witnesses these presentiments, these intuitions of the distant. Then we come to the mass of evidence roughly included under the name of "trance"; that is to say, artificially induced and generally very deep sleep. These are so familiar to most of you that I need only remind you of their transcendent importance as establishing a wider consciousness than that which speaks through the senses, the intelligence, and the emotions. Exaltation of the senses is one of the most marked characteristics of the hypnotic trance, and that leads m to a particular case which I mention because having happened only lately, it is probably less familiar than those recorded in books on hypnotic research. For a long time people have talked of "clairvoyance", and everyone knows it is a dangerous word to use in the hearing of the scientific man. It at once suggests all kinds of fraud. Only if you can bring in the word with a suggestion of X-rays you may go a little further. But now there has come a new title from the lips of a scientific man, who has the right to baptise it. He has found some of his nervous patients endowed with "auto-introspection" in the physical sense - a literal looking into one's own body. And some of these people have been able to look very definitely into their own bodies, and, in one remarkable case of a disorder which is very popular at the present time, the patient not only described the disease, but stated exactly how it was caused, and described a little bit of bone which got into the passage where no bone should be. Afterwards the bone was removed with the most respectable scientific forceps, and no one could doubt the materiality of the proof. But it would not do to say it was clairvoyance, so it is now called "internal autoscopy". It does not matter at all that in the first thirty years of the nineteenth century these facts were observed over and over again, and that some doctors were even driven out of the medical profession for asserting these facts. They were branded as deceived or deceivers, but now the phenomena may be safely observed under the shield of "autoscopy". Now the foregoing is a case of exaltation of the senses. I use the word "exaltation" deliberately. It means that the senses are stimulated to a greater keenness of perception. Exaltation of the intelligence, exaltation of the emotions, these are other steps along the same line, bearing testimony to a Larger Consciousness.

Exaltation of the intelligence is one of the commonest things that happen in the hypnotic trance, and speaking the other day to a famous Parisian hypnotiser, the Colonel de Rochas, he told me that he had succeeded in pressing the memory of some of his subjects back into infancy in the most literal sense of the term; that the memory had been pressed back to the birth of the child. He was in search of certain facts; in search of memory of previous lives, and he is working back and back along the present, across the birth-gateway, across the intermediate life, across the death-gateway on the other side, back to a previous state of existence in this world. He has found a greater increase of the power of memory than had been before observed, but that is already so definitely established that it is hardly necessary to dwell upon it now save as marking that it has been pushed further back than before. Memory loses nothing which has reached us through the senses or the brain.

Exaltation of the intelligence carried to a further point would be genius. Press the exaltation further, make it self-stimulated, instead of stimulated from without; make it a simple heightening of the consciousness without loss of consciousness, instead of a heightening of consciousness *with* loss of consciousness of trance, and you have the beginning of genius, one of the most striking testimonies to the existence of a larger consciousness.

Then you have the exaltation of the emotions, which finds its place sometimes in sudden acts of heroic courage, of marvellous self-sacrifice, stimulated the man knows not whence; only he acts with the courage of the hero, although in his normal state an ordinary man. You can find these things scattered all over the world today. You can find in your own self, if you watch your consciousness, that there are times when you think far better than you can think normally, when your intelligence is quicker, more alert, more piercing than in the normal state; and although you may not touch the heights of genius, in that mere heightening of your, normal consciousness, there is testimony of something larger in yourself than that which is normally at work through the brain. And so with the exaltation of the emotions of which I spoke. In its lower stages it is common enough. In its higher stages it reaches the ecstasy of the mystic and the saint. So that just as the highest exaltation of the intelligence is found in the man of genius, so is the highest exaltation of the emotions found in the mystic of every faith, when he passes into what is called ecstasy, beyond the stage in which he normally resides, and has there experiences more real to him than the experiences that come to him through the gateways of the senses, exercising over him a more compelling power, moulding and shaping his life without appeal.

Now, of the same nature as those, though at a very much lower level of evolution, you find that strange and much ridiculed fact of consciousness that is called among some religious people “conversion”, a most interesting and significant change of consciousness. Granted, much exaggeration often goes with it; granted, it is sometimes only a passing phase, and the man falls back from the exaltation of conversion into the ordinary mud of his previous evil life; nevertheless the subsequent fall does not alter the fact of the temporary elevation. And when, side by side with that, you remark, in reading the records of conversions, that it is only a minority who fall back into the mud, and the majority whose whole lives are changed by that marvellous experience, then - unless you are hopelessly prejudiced with that most bigoted prejudice of all, the prejudice of the narrow-minded scientific man - you will recognise there also testimony to a larger consciousness.

And this conversion comes in a strange way some times. While in India I had a letter from an English missionary. He was a man whom I had met in the days when I was a freethinker. He had been one of those I had met in a Secular Society in Manchester. He had taken part in the work of that Society whilst I myself was in the Secular movement, and because of that he wrote me, and he gave me a record of a strange experience through which he had passed. Travelling in America, he had occasion to pass through that State, wonderful for scenery and marvellous natural phenomena - Colorado. Staying there for a short time, seeing the marvels of nature on every side, his sense of beauty stimulated to a very high degree, his sense of wonder at the power of nature so marvellously displayed around him stimulated also, suddenly, without a moment’s warning, there came an opening of the whole of his consciousness, a sudden rush, as it were, or illumination, what he called a sudden revelation of God. And who shall dare to say that the Life Supreme, which breathes in every atom of the universe which is but His thought, did not reveal Himself to that Spirit which is kin to Himself, and through the marvels of external nature touch a mind and heart which were closed to the ordinary promptings of religion? This at least remained out of that marvellous experience, that it turned him into a religious man. He could not deny the fact that he himself had experienced. He could not deny the breaking down of all the barriers of the ordinary consciousness, of the inflow of a life higher and more compelling. And although it be true that, as was natural from the line of his previous thought and education, the illumination by the eternal Spirit of the Spirit encased in flesh led him on into a somewhat narrow path of a crude form of Christian belief, what matters that, provided the ETERNAL spoke to the ETERNAL, and the God without in nature manifested Himself to the God within in man?

So that I suggest to you, as a line of very interesting study, these facts of conversion. And I rejoice to see the stress Professor James laid upon them, in his work on the *Varieties of Religious Experience*; for it gives them their right place in the New Psychology as facts in human consciousness. And this is at least to be remembered, that the records of the history of the world show the most marvellous results from the actions

of those who trace them all to what they call “conversion”, justifying that saying of Lord Rosebery; that the mystic who is also a man of the world and of intelligence is the most powerful person it is possible to find in human life. Absolutely true. For let the higher consciousness play upon a capable brain, a strong heart, a sound nervous system, and you have a union which nothing on earth is able to conquer, a force which nothing on earth is able to shake.

And then you may follow along these ever-converging lines of study into the strange land of dreams - worthy of most careful consideration. For dreams deserve to be analysed, to be sorted out, to be ascribed to the various parts of the human consciousness from which they take their rise, so that place may be found alike for the mere jumble of rubbish due to some physical brain disturbance and for the dream which opens up a new world of consciousness, or which supplies gaps in the knowledge of the waking consciousness, which enables the intelligence to pursue its studies with a surer foot, and with a keener insight. So that from all these different lines there comes the testimony of a larger consciousness in man.

Now what is that consciousness? Deliberately I have simply called it here a “larger consciousness”, because I would not, as it were, commit any one of us, hearers or speaker, to a theory to start with. These varying lines along which facts may be studied force us into the admission that there is more of us than works through the human brain. What is the “more”? There are two chief views put forward. One I suppose would be called, if we must label it, the scientific; the other, the religious. I do not want to put these two words against each other as though they were still in conflict, for although in the western world the history of religion in the past has been a conflict between religion and science, the most modern science of today is again becoming the handmaid and helper of religion, and that co-operation between the two will, I believe, persist until all human consciousness is illuminated by the light that comes from observation and the light that comes from the Spirit. The first view is the one which regards the unfolding consciousness of man as gradually evolving throughout the growth not only of humanity but of the kingdoms that lie below humanity in evolution; according to some the increase of perfection of the organism leading to an increase in the manifestation of the consciousness, to growth of the consciousness; according to a growing scientific school, the exercise of the consciousness leading to an improvement in the mechanism whereby consciousness is expressed.

When you come to ask on this view: “What is the larger consciousness?” you will find yourself somewhat puzzled how to explain it. What we may call, for the moment, the sub-conscious, that is intelligible enough according to this first view, as we shall see hereafter. For we can readily understand that along the long line of evolution, there will be countless cases in which consciousness worked to a definite purpose, then found that that purpose could be accomplished without giving to it its whole attention; then followed a gradual withdrawal of attention as the habit of the action became more and more woven into the organism, until at last the consciousness was able to leave to the automatism of the organism all that class of acts which at one time it was compelled to superintend and direct. It is easy to see that, behind us on that evolution, there must be remnants of promptings of every kind, remnants of the promptings of the animal, of the savage, of the partly civilised man, all worked more or less into the very material of the bodies in which we live, by physical heredity. So that you may have there a vast mass of promptings coming from the evolution that lies behind us, which has fallen below the horizon of consciousness into the sub-conscious self. But it is difficult along this line to explain genius. For although it may be argued that you would find in the highly complicated organism with which genius is connected greater variability than in a simpler organism; although you might argue that there will be occasional variations, forward-reaching, as we find them all through nature; although you may admit those so-called accidental variations (remembering however, that “accidental” means ignorance on our part, and not absence of law), yet genius is too far ahead of the normal evolution to be explained in that way. It is not a case of a slight forward evolution which may be picked up and emphasised; it is the leaping over of an enormous gulf between the talent of a clever man and the genius of the inspired. It is as though nature, leaping over all connecting links, suddenly out of a stone produced a plant, suddenly out of a plant an animal,

suddenly out of an animal a man. Nature does not make these leaps, and why should she make them in genius more than anywhere else? Accidental variation is not sufficient to explain the transcendency of genius. And there is another difficulty with regard to it - the difficulty that genius tends to unfit its possessor for the ordinary life of the world; that in the struggle for survival of the fittest (for those who believe in that as the line of evolution) genius is a distinct disadvantage, tends even to kill out its possessor, to render him quite unable to survive and have offspring; and this outside the fact that genius is mostly sterile, outside the fact that as the intelligence of the nervous system increases the fecundity of productiveness lessens. Outside all these facts, and the possibility of the transmission of mental and moral qualities at all, let us face this fatal fact, that genius makes its possessor unfit for the struggle of the normal world. It is marked in melancholy letters over the page of history. It comes out to us in all the irregularities of genius - the result of a larger consciousness battling with a world it does not understand, the result of forces it is unable to control when those forces are thrown down into the physical plane; it comes out as increased vitality along many channels, and not necessarily along lines which can be controlled by the will and intelligence. Those are points that need careful investigation, before you accept the view that consciousness is evolving only from below.

The other view is of a very different nature, telling us of a supernal entity, a living Spirit, “a portion of Myself,” it is called in a great Scripture, a divine fragment, a part of the Universal Life, gathering around itself veils of matter that it may come into touch with the many planes or worlds of our system. A spiritual germ; we may call it, planted in the soil of matter. I care not whether you call all matter physical and divide it off by differences of density, or whether you take the ancient and more accurate view that matter rises in an ascending scale, marked off by the difference of subtlety of the atoms that compose that matter, through all the subtler and ever subtler worlds of being. That divine fragment veiled in matter comes, by the medium of that matter, into contact with the phenomena of every plane, the Spirit gradually unfolding and awakening to its inherent, unalienable divine powers. It comes thus into touch with every region of the universe. It recognises the difference between itself and others for the first time on the lowest plane, the physical. There are transmitted through its higher vehicles to its own Self, the consciousness, vibrations from higher planes than these. And slowly the physical vibrations organise in the physical body organs which are able to respond to them, and each new organ opens out a new avenue of knowledge. As the vibrations of the physical plane play upon the outermost casing, consciousness answers from within with thrills of responding life, shaping the matter of its own vehicle into ever-improving organs for the reception from outside of those vibrations. As the evolution proceeds, subtler and subtler vibrations are able to affect an ever-awakening and more and more responding Spirit. And this responsiveness does not stop with the limit of the physical body. The subtler bodies belonging to the planes beyond begin to vibrate in answer to their vibrations, and those are transmitted gradually to the physical vehicle, as it becomes more and more receptive, delicate, and highly organised. As these vibrations are more and more definitely recognised by consciousness in the higher regions, it transmits them more definitely to its physical vehicle, and all that you call premonitions, intuitions, exaltations of the senses, of the intelligence, of emotion, the visions of the mystic and saint, the clear vision of the yogi and of the trained occultist, all that you get in the variety of dreams, all that you get in genius, and in the loftier states of human consciousness, all are the coming down into the physical brain of vibrations received in loftier regions by loftier bodies, gradually being organised for conscious life and work upon those planes. While we are still half-evolved, the recognition of these is confused, but they are never to be confounded with the promptings that come from the evolution of the pas; they are the promise of the future, not the relics of the past; they are the struggles of the eternal Spirit within us to make his vehicles answer to his changes in consciousness. Genius is but the momentary grasping of the brain by that larger consciousness, forcing it into an insight, a strength of grip and a width of outlook that causes its noble reach. It is the putting down more of the larger consciousness into an organism capable of vibrating in answer to its thrills. So that we may now drop the word “larger consciousness” and take a truer title. This larger consciousness is our real Self; this larger consciousness is the real Man, who is not the bodily garments that he wears. And all things that we see around

us that we recognise as hints of a larger consciousness, these are the whisperings, scarce articulate as yet, but with all the promise of the future, that come from the land of our birth, from the world to which in truth we belong; they are the voice of the Higher Self who is truly the larger; they are the voice of the living Spirit, unborn, undying, ancient, perpetual and constant; they are the voice of the inner God, speaking in the body of man.

THE MECHANISM OF CONSCIOUSNESS

In the last lecture we followed certain lines of thought which converged on the idea that the consciousness of man was very much larger than the consciousness that expresses itself through the nervous system and the brain. There were three other lines which I did not mention, and which I will mention now before going on to our special subject "The Mechanism of Consciousness".

The first of those is the fixed idea, a most suggestive subject for study, for the fixed idea is an idea that takes possession of the whole man, that forces him along its own line whether he wishes to go or not, which entirely submerges the ordinary consciousness, overbears the reason, and subjugates the man's wishes and logic, in spite of everything driving him along the road it is determined he should go. Fixed ideas divide themselves into two classes. One class is called madness. You continually find persons who are called insane dominated by fixed ideas, by some idea outside all reason, all argument, an idea which overbears all appeal, all rationality, and when such an idea is found to dominate the consciousness and conduct, the person is called insane. On the other hand, there is another type (some people might say it was a subtle form of insanity, but if so insanity is very beneficial to the world at large); it is the kind of fixed idea that makes the martyr, the saint, and the hero; an idea that dominates all the ordinary attractions of life, in face of which nothing can make an effective appeal, nothing can turn aside the man's steps from the path along which he is going. These are also fixed ideas, and we find them in the very noblest children of the race. Such ideas need explanation; we need to understand wherein they differ from the fixed ideas which we regard as madness, otherwise we shall be inclined to slip into the school of Lombroso, which declares all genius to be madness, and regards the great teachers of the world, Christ, Buddha, and so on, as what are called neuropaths. That is at once so terrible and so absurd, that it will be well if we can distinguish between the fixed idea of the madman and the fixed idea of the hero and saint. Along that line will go some of the study of the larger consciousness.

Then comes the line of dreams, and, lastly, the line along which many, people are inclined to go today, the line of telepathy, the communication of mind with mind without so-called material or rather physical means of communication. These three lines we must add to those I gave in the last lecture. All these are necessarily connected with the larger consciousness, and find their only rightful explanation when that larger consciousness is understood.

Now, I have called our special subject for tonight "The Mechanism of Consciousness". You remember that I started last week with the phrase that it was an axiom some forty years ago with regard to psychology, that all sane psychology must be founded on physiology. Now that is false when it is made to mean that the physiological conditions produce consciousness; it is true when it is meant to mean that the physiological conditions condition the manifestations of consciousness and profoundly modify it in its manifestations on the physical plane. Therefore it is true that you do need to understand the mechanism of consciousness in order to understand the manifestations of consciousness; that you must study the mechanism in order to be able dearly to follow the means of manifestation and, what is still more important, the method whereby the improvement of the mechanism may lead to the fuller manifestation of the consciousness. For just as you might study a pipe through which water was to flow, and you would not say the pipe produced the water, though unless the pipe were there the water would not come into the reservoir; just as it would be a matter of importance that the pipe should not be clogged, so that the water flowing through it should not be diminished in quantity; so it is important that the mechanism whereby consciousness manifests itself shall be improved as far as possible, that it shall not clog the manifestations of consciousness, and that if clogs exist they shall be cleared away, and the circumference of the pipe shall be enlarged if enlargement be possible. To do that, we must understand the mechanism of consciousness.

In the study of that mechanism the first question that arises is: Is man, by the mechanism of his consciousness, related to more worlds than one? And it is rather interesting that some of the earliest thought here joins hands with the latest that the old Rishis of India are in line with Mr. F. W. Myers. They do not use the same words, but they make the same assertion. It is a commonplace in all the ancient Hindu teachings that man belongs not to one world but to three. Each of these three worlds, it is said, must be studied, and man, by the mechanism of his consciousness, is related to each of the three. Truly, there are higher worlds still, but those are effectively connected only with the man become superhuman. Through the normal human evolution, it is said, every man is in touch with three worlds. So also you find something of the same idea running through Christian teaching. We read of a physical world in which man is living, of a heavenly world towards which he is going, and of an intermediate world called by the Roman Catholic Purgatory, by some others Paradise. In theosophical literature you read about the three planes with which man is constantly connected, the physical, astral, and mental, corresponding with the physical body, the astral body, and the mental body. And you read in the last work of Mr. Myers of "three environments" - a phrase which is more scientific and technical, but covers the same idea - the physical, the etherial, and the metetherial, using the prefix "met" in the ordinary sense of "above" or "beyond", and that metetherial environment is, Mr. Myers says, what is called in religion the spiritual world. So we find in the most modern thought the assertion of a triple world with which man is connected, although the third is ill-defined.

There now comes in a question which seems to me to belong only to the modern world. The ordinary Christian who talks to you today will tell you that you go out of this world into the higher worlds by death, not that you are in them now, but that you will pass into them at death; so that death is made the process of passing from one world into another. That view is almost, if not quite, peculiar to modern Christendom. No such thought is found in the older religions. In those religions you find that man is said to be living in the three worlds *now*, and in the latest view of Mr. Myers, you find that he is living in the three worlds *now*, and the New Psychology demands that, in order to give a rational explanation of the problems which confront it. And I venture to suggest that if you would take the idea that man is always living in the three worlds *now*, into Christian teaching, that idea would throw a flood of light upon some of Christ's teachings which otherwise remain obscure. You remember how, when speaking of the kingdom of heaven, he presses the fact that it does not come by observation, that it is not here nor there, and cannot be found by change of place; "the kingdom of heaven is within you" is His mystic phrase, pointing to a profound and spiritual truth. And so again you will find the phrase that "in Heaven the angels of the little ones do always behold the face of the Father". And yet we are taught that the angels of the little ones are always guarding their charges upon earth, the truth being that the three worlds are not separate in space, but interpenetrate each other, so that all have a great area in space in common, and our being in the one world or in the other depends upon the fact that we are clothed upon with three kinds of mechanism, three bodies, three envelopes, each of which puts us in contact with one of the three worlds, and any one of them or all of them may be in use. It is not that at death we find another body; it is only that the physical body is struck away, and we are left in the other two bodies in which we are living, thinking, and feeling now. Death is simply the striking away of the physical envelope, and the only difference it makes to the man is that he cannot, after death, come directly into touch with the physical world, having lost his medium of communication, the physical body. Now if that thought spread among us it would sweep away for one thing very much of the fear of death, for we should not feel ourselves going into a new and strange world, but only find ourselves becoming fully conscious of a world of which we have sometimes been dimly conscious here. Moreover, it would give to religious teaching a far profounder meaning and a far deeper reality. For in truth, whenever remorse burns in the human consciousness, the man is feeling the fires of purgatory, which do not wait for their purifying action until after the physical body is dropped; and whenever, amid the turmoil and trial of the world, you find a sense of peace, of joy, of serenity, it is because the blessed breezes of heaven are breathing upon your fevered brow, and telling you that heaven is around you, and that only the density of your material envelope shuts you out from your birthplace, from your real

home. That is the view of our world with which I start in dealing with the mechanism of consciousness. I shall try to find three media of communication, each belonging to its own world, and each of them active in us now, and serving to some extent as a mechanism of consciousness; two of them are extremely imperfect at the present time, but would readily become more useful to consciousness if only the reality of their existence were recognised, and we were in the habit of trying to use them, and so enabling them to function. For it is the law of developing life that by the effort of the life to function, the organ of that function is gradually builded. You do not induce a child to walk by an elaborate explanation of the muscles of the leg, and of the principle of equilibrium of moving bodies. On the contrary, all you do is to hold out a toy and say: "Try to come and fetch it; you can come if you try." And the child tries. He knows nothing about his muscles, but he makes the effort to move, and the life gradually takes control of its mechanism and the child walks, because the life demands movement and nature has supplied the mechanism. Now it is the same with the mechanism of consciousness, of which you know so little because you do not use it. Try to use it, and it will gradually come under your control and serve you as the baby's body quickly serves the demands of the expanding life; the effort of the life to know will make the mechanism of consciousness ready to be used by the mind.

Now what is the mechanism? I am going to take it coming down, not going up; because coming down is our natural course. We do not begin here and climb up. We are born above and we come down - an important fact. Earth is not our home, but only a foreign country into which we come from time to time for certain purposes of the Spirit. We live in our native land for the greater part of our existence, and the mere fact that we happen to be together in this foreign country just now by no means makes it the most important, or the one in which our true life is rooted. So I will begin above, and trace the man coming down to re-birth.

Now when he is starting on his downward journey to take again a physical body, he is a living Spirit, not wearing any of that mechanism of consciousness with which we are mostly concerned, but clothed in what is technically called the "Causal Body", the body of causes, that name being given because in that body every experience is stored up; because there resides the memory of the Spirit, there resides everything which, during his experiences in the lower planes, he has gradually accumulated. In that spiritual body resides the spiritual memory, and that includes the whole of his almost illimitable past, a past that only finds its beginning in the eternal Being of God Himself. Starting, then, as a Spirit, man clothes himself in mental matter, the matter whereby he shall think during his life in the lower worlds. He clothes himself with the matter of the heavenly or mental plane. Now how is that matter selected? By a fragment of that mental matter which has been in connection with the human Spirit through the whole of his long journeyings, "the permanent particle" we call it in our theosophical nomenclature. And those who have studied what has been said of the "permanent atom" will know the immense part it plays in the evolution of the bodies, in the mechanism of consciousness, and will see how that teaching endorses the scientific teaching of Weissmann, and gives us a true continuity of matter side by side with a continuity of enduring life, of Spirit. I have not time now to give an elaborate explanation of the permanent atom[1]; I must ask you to take it simply in this sense: that it is a material particle, like the biophor of Weissmann, which, having passed through the experiences of life on the mental, astral and physical planes, has gained the power of vibrating so that it can reproduce any of its past experiences, and according to the more complex powers of its vibration will be the complexity of the matter which it gathers round it by attraction for the building of the new mechanism of consciousness.

Now those permanent particles are composed of three units, a mental, an astral and a physical which after death are stored up in the causal body; at re-birth these are put out one after another. The first of them, the mental, vibrating with all its past experiences behind it, draws to itself matter congruous to its own expressions, so that the mental sheath may be suited, in the complexity of its material particles, for the evolved Spirit that is clothing itself with these bodies. The main idea is that the matter of which the

[1] See *A Study in Consciousness*, IV.

mechanism of consciousness is formed should be congruous with the stage of advance of the consciousness itself, so that the envelope should suit the agent who is to use it; and the material of the very undeveloped man would not be identical in the complexity of its particles with that which is used by the more highly evolved. Identical chemically, yes, but in the complexity of its particles, no - an important point when you come to deal with the sensitiveness of the matter and its power of vibrating in answer to thy subtler vibrations that come to it.

Now this first envelope, the mental, is the first that the Ego draws round himself as he descends for re-birth. By "descends" I do not mean movement in space, no such movement is necessary; he draws matter towards himself. To realise this, think for a moment of the difference of receptive power in the eye and in the ear. The power of vibrating which exists in the delicate mechanism of the eye which responds to light enables you to see, while the arrangement of the ear, responding to other vibrations, enables you to hear. The eye opens to you the whole world of sight; without it that world would not exist to you. The ear opens up another world; without it the world of sound would be closed to you. Now that difference of mechanism shows exactly what I mean by the difference between these three envelopes. They are not separate, they are intermingled, but each of them answers to a certain range of vibrations; and just as if you had not the delicate mechanism of the eye you would be shut out from the world of vision, although you might hear perfectly well, so, if the mental envelope is not vibrating fully the man is shut out from the great mental world which is the heavenly world; and also, if the astral body does not vibrate fully in answer to the contacts from the astral world, he is shut out from that, like the deaf man from the world of sounds. It is a question of answering by vibration, not a question of space. If you will only hold steadily to that idea, you will be able to understand that, when death strikes away a beloved one, you are not separated by difference of space, but by the limitations of receptive power; we cannot vibrate in the mechanism of our consciousness to the matter of the worlds in which the departed one is dwelling at the time.

As the man goes down and clothes himself with this mental body, the germs of faculties, worked up from the past life's experiences into powers of the mind, appear in the mental body - not the faculties fully developed, as some suppose, but the germs ready to develop and quick to unfold, so that under the vibrations of thought these faculties will rapidly unfold and show themselves. He begins the next stage of his evolution, the astral. He puts out the permanent astral particle. That, by its vibrations, draws to him congruous astral matter, and builds his astral mechanism. Germs are there also to be found - germs of feeling, of emotion, of all the faculties that belong to that side of his nature, the mechanism of consciousness for desire, for emotion, for sensation. Then comes the building of the physical body. Here another element comes in the physical parents. The Ego builds for himself, with such aid as may be given to him by the inhabitants of those planes, his mental and astral mechanism, but when he comes down into the physical world, the father and mother there contribute to the building of the physical body. Here comes in the working of the Lords of Karma, guiding the incoming Ego to the family able to provide the physical material suitable for his stage of evolution. And here is a point of immense importance. Into that physical body will be built, by the laws of physical heredity, the *physical* past that lies behind: all kinds of dim and vague memories imprinted on the matter itself, far-off remnants worked into the physical body of savage experiences in semi-civilised lives, dream-like memories of that long past wrought into the very substances of the physical mechanism, dim, strange gropings and intuitions that belong to the long line of physical ancestry brought into touch with the new body, where-into they are worked from the fabrics of the bodies of the past, by that law of physical continuity contributing their quota to the mechanism of the physical consciousness. So that you have working on the nervous system in man innumerable influences from the physical past, which will have much to say as to the conditioning of his

consciousness, and contribute many an unintelligible fragment to the whole of the physical consciousness as it appears[2].

Then, in addition to that, you have working; on the nervous system, the subtle influences of the Ego himself, influences coming down from him through the mental and astral bodies already partially formed, contributing to the building of the nervous system in both its great divisions, the sympathetic and the cerebro-spinal. The sympathetic system is mostly connected with the astral body. There are lines of communication with the astral body, many, and subtle, and potent, and during the building of that sympathetic system currents of force have been poured down, helping and guiding to a large extent the building, so that the Ego, with his already developed emotional faculties, has much to do with the building of that system with which the emotions are so closely connected. The cerebro-spinal system comes more and more under the influence of the Ego as he advances in intellectual power, in power of the higher emotions; for as the ages go on and the intellect is developed, more of his direct influence pours on to the cerebro-spinal, and less directly on to the sympathetic system. The sympathetic is influenced more by his previous influences on the astral body, while the cerebro-spinal system is more influenced by his direct working at the time. Thus are these systems builded up for his purposes in his physical life. And after birth the same influences persist. Similarly, as he broods over and interpenetrates his physical vehicle, he works continually on these two great systems that are his peculiar mechanism of consciousness in the physical world. During the course of his long evolution he at one time had only the sympathetic system to work with; no other could he find in order to impress himself on his physical vehicle. Gradually, as he advanced, that fell more and more into the background, and the cerebro-spinal developed. Now comes a significant fact as the Ego more and more manifested himself through the cerebro-spinal system (the brain and the nervous systems connected with it), he gradually passed over to the sympathetic system the parts of his workings definitely established in consciousness, towards which he no longer needed to turn his attention in order to keep them in working order. Slowly the Ego handed on to the sympathetic nervous system the vital mechanism of the body. He passed on to it the management of a large part of the body with which he no longer needed to concern himself. He gave over to the sympathetic system the management of the heart, the lungs, the whole of the digestive apparatus, and other functions which no longer needed for their carrying out his immediate attention. You no longer control the ordinary beating of the heart. Why? Because the Ego has banded that over to the sympathetic system. You can regain that control if you like. The Ego can easily call back, by turning his attention to it, his own direct control over the sympathetic system, and regulate the movement of the heart, lungs, etc. But the taking into consciousness that which consciousness has outgrown is taking a step backward in evolution. So that when you read of people able to control the beating of the heart, you need not think it so very wonderful. None the less this connexion is a very interesting one.

Let us now for a moment look at our fixed idea. What is a fixed idea? When it is a fixed idea that is madness, it is an idea handed over by the Ego to the sympathetic nervous system for the carrying on of some part of the physical mechanism; or, a past mood or idea which he has outgrown; or, a “forgotten” fact, suddenly asserting itself, unaccompanied by its proper surroundings; or, the connexion of two incongruous ideas; and so on. The most interesting type is the second, the resurgence of a past mood or idea. It has left its trace on the sympathetic system; and has become what is now called “sub-conscious”. Now, there are countless ideas of that sort with which the Ego has had to do in his past, and which he has not entirely thrown out of the mechanism of his consciousness; they have lingered in that mechanism although he has gone beyond them. They still have parts of that mechanism that vibrate in answer to them, and so long as any part of that mechanism responds, so long that idea may emerge over the horizon of consciousness. And when it comes up, as it does, without reason, without rationality, with the rush and surge and passionate strength of the past, it overbears the subtler mechanism that the Ego has evolved for his higher purposes. For you must remember

[2] See Lecture III.

that those early manifestations which we have outgrown are ideas stronger on the physical plane than those we call the ordinary mental ones, because their corresponding vibrations being coarser, slower, produce more result from the denser matter. It is far easier to affect the physical body by the surge of a barbaric emotion than by the subtle reasoning of a philosopher. All those manifestations of the lower nature are stronger than those of the higher on the physical plane, by virtue of the length of their past. The mechanism was formed under them and is accustomed to vibrate in answer to them, and that which is building is yet scarcely ready for the higher manifestations, and is often thrown off its balance when the rush comes from below. Take it, then, for the moment, that the fixed idea of the madman is generally an idea that has left its trace on the sympathetic system, and that, during some disturbance or weakening of the cerebro-spinal system, is able to assert itself in consciousness. It arises from below.

But the fixed idea of the saint or martyr is a very different thing. That comes down from the Ego himself, striving to impress upon the physical brain his own loftier emotion, his own wider knowledge. The Ego, who can see further on the higher planes than he can in the physical encasement, tries to impress upon that physical encasement his own will, his own desire for the higher and nobler. It comes with all-dominating power; it cannot approve itself to the reason, for the brain is not yet ready to reason on those lines of higher knowledge and of deeper vision and intuition, but it comes down with the force of the Ego on a body prepared for it, and thus asserts itself as the dominant power, guiding the man to heroic action, to martyrdom, to saintship. You can easily understand the outer likeness of the imperious over-riding of the reason, but the difference is of origin; for these fixed ideas come from above, the former from below.

One of the great difficulties of the New Psychology is that it lumps all abnormal happenings together in the "sub-conscious", because it does not understand the mechanism of consciousness, and because it tries to explain impulses of the consciousness that belong to three worlds, as though the whole of them were not only conditioned by, but found their origin in, the physical mechanism belonging only to the one. So long as that limitation is upon it, so long its problems will remain unanswered.

Take another problem: Madness and genius. Now you have in both the instability which is complained of. Let us take hysteria. In studying this, the brain-conditions of hysteria at first seem so much like the brain-conditions of genius that they are lumped together as one and the same thing. In both the brain is unstable. You need not shrink from that fact. But what is the instability of hysteria due to? It is due either to the violent surge upwards from the sympathetic system, or to the pressure upon an unprepared brain of the higher and subtler forces to which that brain is not able to answer without throwing itself out of gear. And there is a very important truth in the statement of Lombroso and of others of his school, that very many of the saints were neuropaths. I repeat, there is no reason to shrink from the facts. It is true. But why? It does not follow that because he has thus been labelled, the neuropath is to be a branded creature, an outcast from humanity. It is true that very often the saint and visionary have overstrained their brains, unprepared for the beating upon them of those subtle waves from higher regions, and the physical mechanism has been strained and distorted and rendered unstable. Nay, even more is true: it is sometimes true that the instability is the condition of the inspiration, because the normal brain is not yet sufficiently developed, nor delicate enough, to answer to those subtle waves of consciousness. Maudsley hit upon a great truth when he suggested: "What right have we to believe Nature under any obligation to do her work by means of complete minds only? She may find an incomplete mind a more suitable instrument for a particular purpose".[3] And James remarked: "If there were such a thing as inspiration from a higher realm, it might well be that the neurotic temperament would furnish the chief condition of the requisite receptivity".[4] And, if you consider for a moment, you will see why the normal brain is not the fit brain for a mechanism of consciousness from the higher regions. The normal brain is

[3] Quoted by Prof. James, in *Varieties of Religious Experience*, p. 19.
[4] Ibid., p. 25.

fitted by evolution for the work of the world, for buying and selling, for scheming and planning, for lending and borrowing, for speculating and trafficking, and for all the other lines of work carried on in normal society. Suppose you send down upon that brain a number of vibrations from the higher planes, suppose, beating on that normal brain, there come great waves of consciousness from the astral and mental; can you wonder that the brain prepared for earthly life becomes unbalanced under the tension, or even breaks?

On the other hand, genius has an unstable brain because the life pressing upon it in order to improve the mechanism keeps it in a state of tension which is not suitable for the vibrations it meets in the ordinary work-a-day world. The life there is pressing upon its physical limitations, is trying to expand, and just as more life goes into the muscle by the exercises of the athlete, although he may overstrain himself, so does more life flow into the cells of the brain as the consciousness strives to expand them for the expression of the genius, and it may easily go a little too far and make that unstable structure break down under the strain. But the brain of the genius is the promise of the future; it is abnormal on the right side and not on the wrong. It is the very front of the crest of the wave of evolution.

Now in India, where these things are studied, the science of Yoga is intended to prevent the dangers of hysteria in those who are coming into touch with the higher planes. It is, therefore, a science that works along two lines: a discipline and a purification of the body, in order that the nerve cells may be able to vibrate in answer to the higher impacts without disturbance and without the causing of hysteria, and a training of the mind. Therefore, it is said that the food of a man who would receive these vibrations uninjured must be what is called satvic; that is, must have in it the dominance of rhythm, of harmony. For, as you know, the Hindus regard matter - as indeed science does - as having three essential characteristics, of which rhythm is one, and rhythmic food is laid down as essential for the Yogi? Also he must use his mind in meditation, for by the strain of meditation, of fixed thought, he gradually builds up a mechanism of the brain which is necessary for the reception of those higher waves of consciousness; and gradually, so that the physical vehicle may not break under the strain, the mechanism of consciousness is trained to work in answer to the three worlds, instead of only in answer to the one. Those are the principles that underlie the science of Yoga.

We find, as we look at it in this way, that we are face to face with wondrous possibilities as regards our mechanism. We find it may be possible for us to make this mechanism more and more receptive to the waves that come to us from above, and gradually we shall begin to understand. All those vague premonitions, intuitions, dreams, come to us because our astral and mental bodies are being affected in their own worlds, are responding to that etherial and metetherial environment of which Mr. Myer speaks. The whole of these are to be referred to those worlds, and consciousness is answering to them, and these answers affect the physical mechanism of consciousness, coming through in this vague indeterminate fashion. They could not reach us at all unless the mechanism for their reception were already in our possession, unless we were in touch with a higher world than the physical; so that, however unsatisfactory, they bear witness to this inestimable fact, that the human consciousness is not tied down to the physical plane, but stretches into greater worlds than these. But when the knowledge comes through clearly defined, distinct, then we know that it is not knowledge coming from the higher planes by way of vibrations outside the mechanism playing upon it from without; then it comes from the Spirit himself, sending down his own knowledge, his own inspirations, and we can distinguish the inspirations from within from the results of the impacts from without, by the clearness and definiteness of the coming, from the illuminating nature of the revelation.

Now surely, if we grasp these facts, not only do they open new vistas of hope, but in our present life also they are full of encouragement, and give the justification for that in-eradicable instinct in humanity which seeks for Art, Beauty, and Religion, even although they may seem to be of what is sometimes called “no practical value” in the life of men. I saw a quotation from a materialist in a book some months ago, to the effect that art and religion were bye-products - a most significant phrase. A bye-product is something produced in the process of

manufacture, which does not conduce to the end aimed at in the manufacture, but simply comes out in the process and is cast aside. Truly are Art and Religion bye-products of human evolution, if the only mechanism of consciousness is in the physical body. Truly, if the life of man is only in this particular world, would Art and Religion be bye-products, for they would not conduce to man's material progress, they would not conduce to man's conquest of the earth. But if the evolution of man is not an evolution in one world but in three; if man is not only the noblest of animals but a living Spirit from God Himself; if the human consciousness is living in the three worlds and not only in the one, with a boundless glory beyond those worlds of which now we can only dream - ah! then, Art, which tells of beauty, which is harmony and therefore divine, is a process of priceless value for the evolution of the higher consciousness, and every dream of the artist, every dream of the musician, every dream of beauty which has come to the human brain, is only a glimpse of the Eternal Beauty, which is God in one of His manifestations, and has in it the promise of a future evolution, when that Beauty shall be unveiled before the eyes of men. And Religion, which is the search after God, which is the deep in-rooted belief that man can know God, and that man is one in his spiritual nature with God Himself, that, instead of being a bye-product, is the most essential factor in human evolution, and its influence on man is the influence of a wider future, which makes the guidance of life reasonable in regard to the whole of this evolution, and not in regard only to the fragment of it that we see on the physical globe. For Art and Religion are only justified by this, that they belong to a greater world; that they belong to a longer evolution; that they are the evolution of the Spirit and not of the body, of the God in man, and not of the triumphant brute. And if that be true, ah! then they are all important to human kind; if that be true, then all things physical that men follow here are as dust in the balance when weighed against them. Human wealth and human power, human fame and human glory, these are only the things of a moment, unworthy of the eternal Spirit; but Art, which is the pursuit of Beauty, and Religion, which is the seeking after God, these are indeed the true ends of life; to them points our evolution; towards them our growth is tending; and the triplicity of the mechanism of consciousness reveals the ends of man's true evolution, and the purposes of the worlds in which he lives.

SUB-CONSCIOUSNESS AND SUPER-CONSCIOUSNESS

I must ask you tonight to bear in mind last Sunday's lecture, "The Mechanism of Consciousness", so that you may be able to put into their appropriate places the phenomena with which we are this evening to deal.

I have called our subject: "Sub-Consciousness and Super-Consciousness". I do not, of course, mean to exclude from our consideration that very important part of consciousness -in fact to most people the most important part - the Waking-Consciousness. We shall want to understand the relation of the Waking-consciousness both to the sub-consciousness and to the super-consciousness.

The difficulty you must all have in reading such works as that of the late Mr. Myers, is the difficulty of classification, the want of some arrangement under which the facts may fall. And it is really that kind of framework that I desire to place, if possible, at your service. And first of all we have the necessity of distinguishing in the mass of what Mr. Myers calls the sub-conscious, between the two factors which I shall ask you to consider as the sub-conscious and the super-conscious.

Now, Mr. Myers uses one very convenient simile when dealing with the sub-conscious; he speaks of a diaphragm, below which fall those facts of consciousness which he then calls the sub-conscious, just as the diaphragm divides the trunk of the body, and there is no immediate communication between the two halves thus divided, save the alimentary canal. So he tries, as it were, to put a diaphragm across the facts of consciousness. All that is below it is the sub-conscious; all that is above it is the waking-consciousness. Now we can utilise that figure, if you please; but then I shall want to have two diaphragms; one such as Mr. Myers has, below which consciousness falling shall be called sub-conscious; and another above the ordinary waking-consciousness, so that anything which is above that second diaphragm may be called the super-conscious. I think we shall be able to distinguish clearly between the one and the other. We shall be able to find and to identify the part of the mechanism through which the sub-conscious and super-conscious arrive in the waking-consciousness; and although we shall find, especially on one point, that there will be a little doubt as to how we shall classify one set of facts, still, speaking generally; the classification will serve us well enough.

Now, when we speak of the waking-consciousness, what do we mean? And what is it that limits that waking-consciousness? Why does some part of what we call our consciousness escape us, whether it sink below or whether it soar above? What we call the waking-consciousness is that which we find normally in or through the brain - I ought, perhaps, to say "the centre of waking-consciousness", for that place is not always the brain; if we go back into the waking-consciousness of very slightly developed creatures, we go farther back than the time when the brain appeared, and then the principal ganglion of the nervous system would act as the mechanism of the waking-consciousness. But for us today the brain is that through which the waking-consciousness plays. I do not say that nothing more comes through it, but. that which we find normally in the brain, and of which we are aware, we shall call the "waking-consciousness"; and when we notice it, we find it is made up of percepts and concepts derived from the outer world primarily, and then manipulated by the brain - manipulated by our thought using the brain as its instrument. This will be our general definition of what constitutes the waking-consciousness. You must not forget to add to that which is derived from the outer world, the results of the working on that by the brain, for that is of enormous importance; and if it be left out, the contents of the waking-consciousness may be too narrowly defined. Nor must we forget that, according to the development of consciousness, there will be a greater or less working and manipulation of that which comes into consciousness from the outer world. The faculties which we possess, that we have brought with us out of our past, which we have largely developed in our life between death and birth, these work upon the materials coming from the outside world, and work upon them to very different extents. According to the development of these faculties will be the power of perception of the outer world. There is a very different power of perception between, say, the artist and the ploughman. The same things may present themselves to

each, but the power of perceiving what is presented will depend upon the evolution of the faculties. So that we cannot leave out that question of individual evolution of faculty, when we come to consider the contents of our waking-consciousness.

The contents of the waking-consciousness will be clear-cut and defined; that is a characteristic of thought working in and through the brain. Where the brain is concerned, the outlines of the thought can be readily seen and grasped; and it would appear that one of the reasons of this coming down of consciousness into lower planes is this obtaining of clear-cut ideas about the universe. For it is a very marked fact, in studying the evolution of consciousness, that the clearness begins on the lowest plane, the clearness of the higher planes being gradually added; and it is necessary that consciousness shall pass through the physical plane in order that it may definitely grasp and understand. This point has a most important bearing upon evolution, for it must have struck some of you as strange, when studying the evolution of the senses, that coming downwards the senses increase in number. The sense-organs belong to the physical plane, and they develop one after another; but as we return homewards in our upward climbing, we lose these senses one after another, so that on reaching the mental plane the phrase is used that there is only one sense. The real meaning and interest of that lies in the fact, that we cannot first gain on the mental plane this clear-cut definition; we can only learn the outer world by coming down to the physical, developing the sense-organs, learning to use them, and by their help developing the centres in the astral body from which they originated; and after all that has been done, and clearness of vision has been attained, then the means of the gaining can be thrown aside, and we can keep the definiteness on the higher planes which we could not have obtained without the descent into the lower. And so a meaning attaches to the mystic words used in the Upanishats, where it is said of the Supreme: “Without senses enjoying sensations”. They could not be reached without the primary definition on the physical, but in the upward course of man in his evolution towards divinity, he will be able to drop the *organs* while still preserving the *faculties* evolved by the help of and through those organs.

Returning from that slight digression - which seemed, none the less, to be needed for the grasp of our subject - we come to the fact that the content of our waking-consciousness is that which comes from without, and which is worked upon by the faculties already developed in evolution. And we have one other thing to remember in dealing with the waking-consciousness, that it is ever changing as to content, that it only at each moment includes the things to which we are attending. The enormous importance of attention has come out more and more in modern Psychology. Now the attention of consciousness is like the fixing of the eye on a particular spot. You can only see generally within certain limits; you can only see clearly that towards which the eye is definitely directed. But you are vaguely conscious of other things outside the clear field of vision, and this has given to psychologists a convenient image; that that which is in waking-consciousness is that which is within the direct vision. There will be a fringe of which we are half-conscious, and of which at any moment we may become fully conscious by turning our attention to it. The power of attention is a thing which can be enlarged. Now, while many of you, looking at a number of objects, would be able to define only three or four of them, if you trained your physical power of attention to accurate observation, you would find you could greatly increase the number of things towards which that vision could be directed at the same time, with a perfect recognition and distinction of the objects perceived. It is an area that may be enlarged by practice; and this is also true as regards the attention. You will find that by practising attention you can greatly enlarge it, and attend to more and more things at one and the same time; that you can bring a larger number of ideas within the field of clear vision. It is a useful practice, whether as regards the physical or the mental eye, to seek to enlarge its area of observation, to make that field of clear vision larger in both cases.

But still that curious question arises: What is it that limits the waking-consciousness? We are told that our consciousness is much larger than our waking-consciousness. But why? Why should we not be able to bring into waking-consciousness everything of which we are conscious anywhere? There are two points which we must understand in this relation: the first of them is rather analogous to the vibration of the eye. We cannot

see below the red nor above the violet, although vision is possible beyond these limits, the ant normally seeing by means of vibrations for which we are blind; and there is something of the same kind with regard to the brain through which our consciousness is focussed. It can only answer to vibrations which fall within a certain range. In the first place, its power of vibrating depends on the material of which it is composed. Let me recall for a moment what is called the "permanent atom". Remember that the atoms you draw to yourself, all the molecules made up of atoms, are conditioned by the amount of development and the power of vibration in your own permanent atom, that which has passed with you through the ages, the magnet on each plane whereby you attract round yourself your new body for your use. According to the experience stored up in the permanent atom will be the nature of the material that we draw to ourselves; so that there you have a very definite limitation.

You are limited, moreover, by your past experiences, and the record of those, preserved in these permanent atoms, will exercise a limiting power over your waking-consciousness; you cannot bring within it more than is permitted by those stored-up powers of vibration which govern the matter which you draw around you, the permanent atom exercising the selective action of which I spoke last week. But that is not all; another point is the absolute constitution of that atom, as regards the number of spiral strands which are active in it, according to our stage of evolution. Now, in the ordinary physical atom, at the present stage of evolution, four of these spiral strands - technically termed "spirillae" - are normally active; so that the matter around us, out of which we have to select the material of our bodies, is normally developed up to a particular point; according to the number of spirillae active in the atom will be the amount of consciousness that you can bring into the brain, the amount of thought to which those atoms will be able to respond. But the number of active spirillae in the material all around us is increased in the brains of those whose thought-power is more largely developed; so that those who are definitely and carefully thinking day by day are not simply improving their own brain, but also improving for others the amount of available material of a higher kind. For you must remember that we have no life-tenancy of our bodies, but a tenancy which is constantly beginning and ending. Atoms are constantly coming in and going out. While those atoms form part of our brain, they are subject to every improvement, which our thought-power can bring to bear upon them; so that we literally become helpers of the consciousness evolving in the world by the evolution of our own. We cannot live an isolated life. Nature has bound us together by bonds none is able to break; and whenever we are thinking, and thereby improving the matter in which we think, we are also acting as helpers of the world's consciousness, and giving to our brother man, by virtue of our identity of nature, better material with which he also can work, making easier for him the coming down of the higher consciousness into the brain.

There we have one side of the limitation - the material: the other comes from outside us. It is the limitation set by those generally spoken of as the "Lords of Karma", the "Archangels", who have to do with the administering of human destinies, with the balancing of human affairs. They form one, and perhaps almost the chief, of the limiting factors; for according to our past karma is the general mould of the brain with which we are to be born, especially according to that part of our past karma selected by Them as sufficiently congruous to be worked out in a single earth-life. According to that will be the general shape of the brain, we supplying the material to be built into it, but not ourselves controlling that general outline, that larger moulding of the shape of the brain. And it is quite possible that anyone, with some un-exhausted karma behind him which needs for its carrying out a limitation of the faculties of the waking-consciousness, might come into incarnation with only so much of the physical substratum of thought shaped in the brain as fits the working out of the karma which is to occupy that human life. That is a decided limitation, for although it be ultimately self-made, it comes from without so far as this present life is concerned. These limitations within which we are compelled to work, this lack of these faculties that often distresses and annoys us, are the signs of the limitations imposed upon us from without by the working of causes we ourselves have initiated, although their application at the

moment is brought about by forces external to ourselves. Those two things seem to be an explanation of the limitation of the waking-consciousness - why so much comes down, and no more.

Pass from that to the sub-consciousness. Now here we have to fare a difficulty: it contains a great mass of different things that need to be sorted out and arranged. It has well been called a “vast lumber-room”, and in it we find all kinds of relics of the past - all sorts of rags and tatters of yesterday, which are still attached to the vehicles in which we are working; and we need to sort out the lumber in order to recognise, when anything comes to the surface, its place in our consciousness, its root in our past evolution. First of all, there will be a mass of things - to which I hastily alluded last week - which have been handed over by the waking-consciousness to the sympathetic nervous system. Those we must separate and put on one side, as they differ greatly in characteristics from those which have fallen a little out of the ordinary working cerebro-spinal system, but lie still in the brain and nerves, which are also in the sub-consciousness, but stored up in a different part of the mechanism. There are many cupboards in the lumber-room of sub-consciousness in which different things are stored, and from which they may come forth.

Now those which are stored in the sympathetic system will include all those strange and dim relics of our past that have come down to us through our parents, and also through our own permanent atoms. They will be vague, dim, difficult to grasp - remnants of savage lives, nay, even of animal existences, dull gropings and searchings long left behind by the advancing consciousness of man, memories dim and blind, which still have left their marks on our physical system. To those belong very many of the so-called causeless terrors to which some sensitive people are exposed, a fear that comes they know not why, a fear which cannot be overcome by any reasoning. Reason may dominate for a time, but if the fear be very strong, the body will be carried away in spite of reason. Such causeless panic - I am not speaking of the panic that sometimes sweeps over a crowd, a very different thing - is occasionally found within ourselves when in bad health, through the exhaustion of the cerebro-spinal system. A causeless terror will sometimes rise up from the past. Sometimes it takes the form of a fear of the “super-natural”. That fear may, indeed, be given rise to in another way; but there is a certain fear of the “super-natural” belonging to the remnants left in the sympathetic system from the past, from the time when men lived in constant fear of the unknown, and when, in the unknown of nature they saw armies of super-natural enemies. That fear arises sometimes from national and ancestral traits conveyed to the physical body, and things which we do not fear in our waking-consciousness, assert themselves at times as objects of dread. One instance of that comes to my mind in the case of the great writer, Thomas Carlyle. He said that during the day-time he did not believe in the devil, but that if he awoke in the middle of the night, he thoroughly believed in him. He did *not* believe in the devil; but the impressions of his Scottish ancestry, the impressing on the child-mind of that terrible enemy, and the fear of being grasped by him in some moment of folly - that remained sub-consciously, and rose up in the mind at the time when the vitality of the physical frame was at its lowest point - during the night. Here, however, there had mingled with the ancestral reminiscences that second form of unconsciousness belonging to the present life, where the thoughts had simply sunk into a deeper layer of the physical brain, and had not been handed over to the sympathetic system. It is possible by means of hypnotism to differentiate these two forms of unconsciousness. You cannot, in the hypnotic trance, revive that which is in the grip of the sympathetic system, but you can revive that which is in the deeper layers of the brain. Then there are all those actions alluded to last week, which were purposeful in the past, but which have been handed over to the sympathetic system to carry on, and those play a very important part in the sub-consciousness. There is very much that we used to do with attention, to which we now pay no attention. There is only a certain amount of attention available, although it may be slightly enlarged, and as the Ego finds he is able to take advantage of the automatism of nature, and hand over to the vehicles the repetition of that which he has made them do over and over again, this sub-consciousness increases, and everything which falls under the sympathetic control becomes sub-conscious. You know how readily in our already trained nerves and muscles this handing over a thing to the automatic power of the physical body

takes place. One of the commonest instances would be the act of writing, or of playing upon the piano. You know how a child throws his whole body into the action of learning to write; how he makes all sorts of faces; how he writhes in the agony of attention. He cannot help it; the whole force of his attention has to be turned towards the difficult manipulation of his fingers. As the automatic habit is established, the fingers write without his thinking of the movement. And in the case of the trained pianist, well-known passages are performed entirely by the automatic power of the body. And that is continually going on. The Ego takes advantage of the automatism of his vehicles to put into their hands as much as he can get rid of. Remember he is always striving upwards, trying to get rid of the lower planes; he is always trying to throw off the burdens that prevent his climbing. He does not want to be bothered, say, with the looking after of the vital functions of the body, and only gives his attention to the machinery he has trained when anything goes wrong. The whole of that we can put aside as sub-conscious. All such workings are recoverable with pains, but it is not worth while; on the contrary, the more we can hand over to that automatism the better. The less we have to utilise our waking-consciousness for the things that are constantly recurring, the more shall we have to work with for the things that really need its attention; and it is a distinct gain, as we hand over one part of our purposive action after another into the careful mechanism of the sympathetic system, with its power of doing after a certain amount of practice that which it is most desirable that it should do.

But there is another part of the sub-consciousness a little more difficult to define. I put it rather on the border between the sub-conscious and super-conscious. It comes through the sympathetic system; therefore it has the mark of the sub-conscious upon it. On the other hand, it does not belong to the past, so that it loses one of the hall-marks of our sub-conscious; for, speaking generally, the sub-conscious comes out of the past. Now, we find coming into the waking-consciousness certain vague intuitions; certain vague fears - not the same as that spoken of just now, but others that we cannot grasp - the fear of impending misfortune which is often followed by news of misfortune, the half-knowledge of the death of some friend, of an accident or illness of some one dear to us; these come to us from the sub-consciousness in this intermediate condition. We can trace exactly how they come, and you must decide for yourself, after looking at the way of their occurring, whether you classify them as sub-conscious or super-conscious. They come from the astral plane, and they come from phenomena of that plane affecting the vibrations of the surface of the astral body from outside. Some misfortune which has just occurred makes a vibrating picture on the astral plane. That picture, vibrating in astral matter, affects the astral body from without, coming up against it just as you might feel a breeze, throwing the surface of the astral body into vibrations. Those vibrations will convey themselves to the sympathetic nervous system, especially by way of the solar plexus-the most important plexus, perhaps, in that system, as regards the communication with the astral body. By way of the sympathetic system generally and the solar plexus particularly this feeling will assert itself, will be passed on by the sympathetic system to the brain, and so, coming into the waking-consciousness, make you conscious of the dread. It has worked itself round in this way: from outside to the vibrating astral body, through that astral body to the sympathetic nervous system, to the solar plexus, and from the solar plexus it works its way upwards through the connecting links to the brain, where it emerges in our waking-consciousness. This is often accompanied by a feeling of sickness if the vibration be very strong, and that feeling of sickness is very characteristic of the place at which it enters, the solar plexus, so constantly connected with the mechanism of the stomach. You will often find, if you observe carefully, that these manifestations of dread are accompanied by a feeling of physical sickness. And so with many other sensations, especially those of fear, of a different kind from that which I mentioned, and said I would refer to again. Many people have a feeling of dread which is not the feeling of dread transmitted from our ancestors, nor a dread arising from the deeper layers of the brain, but is a dread originating in the astral plane, and working its way down on to the physical in the same way that the coming of the vibration I have just described makes its way to the physical brain. There are many beings on the astral plane whose presence is antipathetic to man, whose feelings are not friendly - partly because man is so destructive an animal. The elementals having to do with the physical and animal world are all more or less

hostile to the human race, because of the trouble the human race causes them. If you watch the thoughtlessly destructive action of many people, you will readily see how the hostility may arise from the astral plane, where these particular elementals have their habitat; and this feeling of hostility arouses a trembling in the astral body, and this causes vibration in the sympathetic system, and the corresponding change in consciousness appears as a fear in the physical brain. This very often takes place at night for the reason alluded to, that the physical vitality is then lower than during the day. Moreover, if your nervous and muscular systems are out of order, you will often be troubled by certain fears of the senses, which give rise to what are roughly called hallucinations - visions which are often the dim catching sight of beings existing in the astral world. To get rid of those, increase the health, and, by understanding whence they come, oppose your knowledge to the influence on the brain.

This leads us on to a consideration of the super-conscious; and I should give as the general definition of the super-conscious, that which is in consciousness on the super-physical planes, and when sent down to the physical plane arrives directly in the brain, not through the sympathetic system; where it comes from the astral, it comes from the astral senses communicating with the physical senses, and not from the surface of the astral body communicating with the sympathetic system. This is an important point; because here you want to increase while controlling, and not to chase away and get rid of. Now many visions and hearings of voices come in this way, and the first thing in dealing with them is not to be afraid. The moment you fear, you are losing grip of your brain, and are falling under the control of your sympathetic nervous system; so that fear is the most deadly enemy of the man who would bring the super-consciousness into connexion with his normal waking-consciousness. If you are timid, leave it alone, for you may injure yourselves, causing nervous disintegration which may go on even into madness. I say that, because visions and voices are always regarded by doctors as signs of danger; and they are signs of danger if they come accompanied with instability of the nervous organisation. They are not signs of danger, but signs of a widening of the brain-consciousness, if they come with health and with sanity, apart from any symptoms of hysteria, any eccentricity of thought and conduct. If you find the normal is disturbed with the coming of these visions or voices from the super-conscious, then set to work to improve your normal health. If, on the other hand, you find the normal is not upset, if you find you axe sane for your everyday work while at the same time this opening of consciousness is perceived, then you can go on without attending particularly to the question of the nervous mechanism. I do not forget, in saying this, that very often true visions from the super-consciousness come hand in hand with a disorganised nervous system. This is perfectly true; because, as I told you last week, the stage of evolution we have reached is not yet sufficiently high for the sane vibration of the brain in connexion with these higher vibrations. Therefore, they need not be at once rejected, because you find them accompanied by some instability of the normal brain; but such nervous trouble is a danger-signal, warning you to take care of the body and not press it beyond its possibility of healthy existence; a sign only to allow them to come very slowly, gradually, deliberately, to shut the door upon them to a considerable extent, until the brain accustoms itself to the reception of such messengers. You may say: “How can I do it? They come uninvited”. Still you can shut your door. Occupy the brain with something else, and that normal exercise of the brain will prevent these visitors from being too insistent. It is not that you are going to shut them out altogether, but you are not going to let them break up the mechanism whereby hereafter they shall come normally into consciousness. You see that you are here treading difficult ground, and knowledge is absolutely necessary for safety.

From the super-conscious region come down those impulses which are called the promptings of genius. Directly from the higher Self-conscious ‘I’ these promptings of genius come down, sometimes causing instability of the brain which is not yet fitted for the reception of them; but that is the instability of growth, not of disease. But you may say: “Sometimes with the genius we find great irregularity of moral conduct,” and that is a point which puzzles people very much. Why is it that hand in hand with these rushes from the higher planes, coming from the higher mental plane straight down into the brain, why should those be accompanied

by irregularities of life? Under that strange phenomenon is working a law which it is well to understand, a law obscure in its workings, subtle in its bearing upon life, but none the less of enormous importance, and most important of all for those who desire to quicken their evolution and increase the incomings from the super-consciousness. It is this: when any force comes down from a higher plane it is subject to transmutation in the vehicle into which it comes. According to the nature of the vehicle will be the transmutation of the force; not the whole of it - some will come through in its pristine glory, and assert itself in the lower world in its spiritual splendour, but a large part of it will be changed *by the vehicle into which it plays, and it will then be changed into the form of energy to which that vehicle lends itself most readily*. This is the law, and a law of far-reaching importance; for it means that it is not well for a great rush of spiritual or of higher mental life to come down into the unprepared body - not now from the standpoint of the danger of nervous disorganisation, but because the ordinary channels of energy in that body will catch the flow, and will transmute part of it simply into greater vitality, strengthening the force which is accustomed to run in those channels; so that if an organism have a tendency, say, to sexual excitement, genius will immensely increase the force of that sexual excitement by that part of it which is transmuted into vitality. Some of you who are students of the past may have caught a glimpse of the fact that it was this which made necessary the coming of the Sons of Mind into the Third Race; the downfall of the spiritual life into the channels of the animal man so enormously increased his animal powers, that it was necessary that the Sons of Mind should come to the helping, or humanity would have plunged down into the vilest of animal excesses, the very force of the spiritual life would have increased the depth of the plunge into degradation. So that when you are inviting, as so many are inviting today, the down-flow of the super-conscious into the waking-consciousness, take care as to the purity of the vessels into which that water of life is to flow. It was once said by a great Teacher that just as the purest water becomes polluted and muddy when it flows into vessels that are foul, so is the Divine Wisdom defiled when it flows into minds that are unprepared, into hearts that are impure. Certainly strive to bring within your being the down--flow from the higher planes; certainly strive to open up the whole of your nature to the rays of sunshine which come from those loftier regions; but beware, in inviting that fecundating force of the sunlight, that there are no seeds of foulness within your nature, which may be quickened into growth when the sunlight falls upon them.

Beware that you purify the nature, before you invite the inflow of the higher forces. Hence has it been said to the candidates for the higher teaching: “First, cease from evil.” Until you have ceased from evil, the less of the higher life that flows into you the better. After you have ceased to do evil, begin the control of the senses. Subject them absolutely to the mastery of the mind; then bring the mind under the control of the higher mind, and make the wanderings and errancies of the lower mind quiet and still, under the influence of the higher.

Only when the man has thus purified the vehicles, only in the tranquility of the senses and the silence of the mind, can he see with safety the glory of the Self. I do not give the warning in order to discourage you from treading the higher path, from seeking for the higher life; the warning is only the warning of one who has seen the dangers of the inflow of the life into the unprepared and unpurified vehicles. I repeat the warning of the ages and of the Wise, and simply put it into modern phraseology Climb! climb as you will, with full courage, with steady heart, with open eyes, fearlessly, without dread of aught that you may meet; for the Divine within you is stronger than aught that is without you. But as you climb the ladder, take care that the feet are clean with which you climb. Cleanse the feet before you climb the ladder, and do not soil its rungs with the mire of earth; for that will make your feet cling to the ladder, will prevent the climbing, or even may make you slip and fall.[5] Climb as you will; but remember that only to the pure is the vision of the Divine vouchsafed. Climb as you will; but remember that the super-consciousness must come down into a waking-consciousness that is pure. If you purify it, then climb onwards swiftly as your courage can carry you, swiftly as your enthusiasm can

[5] See *The Voice of Silence*. Trans. by H. P, Blavatsky.

raise you; for to the pure there is no danger in any world, and to the heart of the pure will all Nature's secrets be unveiled.

CLAIRVOYANCE AND CLAIRAUDIENCE

We are to study tonight certain phenomena very well known in their outline, and becoming more and more common in our day. They are still more common if we travel across the Atlantic, and even commoner yet as we go West across America. This increase of people who possess powers at present abnormal and unusual is very marked if you follow along the line I have suggested. This increase appears to be partly due to the climatic conditions, and partly, perhaps, to the temporary instability that is the result of crossing races with each other - more, however, I am inclined to think, is due to climatic influences than to the other causes. The electric tension in the atmosphere has a remarkable effect upon the nerves, and the condition of the nerves is closely concerned with the lower forms of clairvoyance. I am told that the proportion of people who show capacity in this way has increased even in late years. When I myself was on the Californian Coast some eight years ago, I noticed, in dealing with a public audience, that there was no need to argue as to the reality of the facts; so many people having had experiences of their own, so many more having heard of the experiences of relatives or friends, the task of the Theosophist there changes its character. One had to explain things which they accepted, and not to argue, as you still must on this side of the Atlantic, as to the reality of the happenings. So far as the reality of them goes, however, we find a great change is coming over public opinion here as well. The facts are so well authenticated, they have been subjected to such careful analysis and scrutiny, that when you come to the irreducible minimum you have facts, that even scepticism can hardly challenge.

This evening I want, if possible, to classify these phenomena, and show you the lines along which they appear to go; to show you the part of us which is concerned with them, as I may say, and so perhaps, by giving you an outline of that kind, I may make it easy for you hereafter to put such phenomena in their proper places; to deal intelligently with them; and to explain to those who have not studied the theosophical theory how luminous it is with regard to these abnormal happenings.

Let us recognise, then, that we are to deal now with a perceiver, an inner Man, who is going to perceive as much as he can through his available organs. He is well accustomed to use his physical organs - for tens and hundreds of thousands of years he has been working with these, so that he has comparatively no difficulty with them; he understands fairly well the phenomena that surround him on the physical plane. He can sort them out according to reiterated observations, and he knows quite well that he answers to these whenever the vibrations that come from them strike upon a part of his body able to vibrate in the same fashion, whenever he is able to reproduce within his body vibrations similar to those that strike on that body from without. He knows that the power of perceiving varies in himself and in others, even within the familiar physical senses. He knows perfectly well, by innumerable scientific experiments, that the power of hearing is not the same in all the people around him, but varies very much, although it is not called “clairaudience” until it goes far beyond the normal. Before that point it would simply be called “exceptional acuteness of hearing”, and no sort of difficulty arises in the way of the most scientific mind accepting these differences. Of course you know how the siren is used to test hearing; higher and higher notes are given out, and as the notes become higher and higher; one after another of the listeners drops out, and says: “There is silence.” Now, there is not silence, but only incapacity to hear; the machine is going on, and some are able to hear the note after the first person has dropped out. A second says: “There is silence,” but others still hear. So you can go on and on, until at last you reach a note which no one present is able to hear. You have gone beyond the limits of even acute physical hearing. What do we need, then, to go a little farther? We simply need to have the organ of physical hearing made a little more tense, so that it responds to rather swifter vibrations. And similarly with sight. Here we need to make the organ of sight a little more delicate, so that we may be able to respond to vibrations to which at present it is insensible; for the whole thing turns on that - the organ of sensation, the nature of the vibration - endless vibrations are around us to which we are wholly insensible. They do not exist for us.

Let us try, then, first of all, to classify, with regard to sight, the phenomena which present themselves under the general name of "clairvoyance". The first of these will come when what you may call the ordinary physical sight becomes a little sharper; and it can be made a little sharper by treatment. I want to take you step by step, so that you may see that there is nothing really marvellous here, but a ladder, the steps of which are perfectly intelligible. The first thing is to make the physical sight a little more acute by dealing with it in a particular way. One successful way has been to shut the person up in a cellar for a time. The darkness has a certain effect upon the retina, rendering it more sensitive. This was observed by Baron von Reichenbach many years ago, but he came a little too early. He shut people up for hours in the dark, and found that a considerable portion of these people could thereafter see that which they could not see when they went in; and the thing that they saw was simply the light emanating from a magnet. He took his people from all classes of society, and he found a large number of them could see the magnet in the dark, and notice that there was more light round the poles than in the middle. Those experiments you can read at your leisure. And they have never really been disproved, or improved upon. Among other things he noticed was that people could not only see the light of the magnet, but could see the mesmeric fluid emanating from the finger tips of the mesmerist.

Then we come to a modern experiment, an interesting one, the details of which I was told the other day by a well-known French scientist, who was interested in the debated question of the "N" rays. As you may probably know from the reports, some people can see those rays, and some cannot; therefore the first thing the scientist says is: "Oh! they are a delusion." But a little breach was made in that favourite and accustomed attitude by finding that two or three of the scientific men, who could not see at first, could be made to see by subjecting them to the same training in a cellar, so that after sitting in darkness for three or four hours, they were able to see the rays. And this seems to me a point of enormous importance to the regular scientific man - that there is a possibility of training the body to see more than it can normally see. For that is the beginning of quite a new system: that a man may come into touch with subtler vibrations, not by proving a physical apparatus outside himself, but by improving the physical apparatus of his own body - a very popular way of working in Eastern lands, where the method of science is to improve the body of the scientist rather than to make more delicate instruments with which he can experiment outside. Of course, I do not say that those experiments have established to the universal satisfaction of scientific men the existence of the "N" rays; they have not. But they have done much in that direction, and their repetition over and over again will make the matter more definite and more generally accepted. You have there, then, a slight increase of the delicacy of ordinary human sight by subjecting it to certain conditions.

The next stage is that by changing the balance between the muscular and the nervous systems a little, you can sometimes obtain a greater keenness of vision, or a greater delicacy of hearing, than is normal to the individual concerned. Where the person is in strong and robust health, he will be blind and deaf to these delicate vibrations. Supposing the muscular strength diminishes and a tension is put upon his nerves, either deliberately by artificial action, such as fasting - a favourite way in the Middle Ages - which lowers the bodily vitality and tends to, make the nerves more sensitive; or accidentally, as in cases of nervous tension, either by mental worry or in any other way. Under these conditions a partial clairvoyance will show itself, which decreases when healthier conditions are recovered. An old friend of mine, a materialist, was rather remarkable in this way for her occasional clairvoyant sight - remarkable because she remained a materialist in spite of it. If she were very anxious, worried, over-worked, or a little ill, she would find herself seeing where; as she said, there was nothing. She saw in a very peculiar way a friend of hers who had lately passed over. She saw what we call the "etheric double", and she described exactly the disintegration the etheric double undergoes as the physical body decays; so that anyone knowing anything about the break-up of the etheric double could trace from her description what she had seen. At the time, I had nothing by which to explain these facts, but later on I came to understand what it was she had seen. Another of her experiences was one concerning a man she had known fairly well, and with whom she had often gone to concerts. The man died. To her great surprise, this

gentleman one day appeared to her and walked with her, discussing musical points, so that she could hardly convince herself that he was dead, or that she herself was under a delusion. She told me that the whole thing was so common-place and natural that she looked upon it as a most extraordinary happening, and left it as a thing she could not explain. That experience also I put by as an interesting and to the materialist an unexplained, fact. There was in this case the change of balance I mentioned, the lack of vigour of the ordinary muscular system, and the overstrained condition of the nerves. It is no answer to that to say: "hallucination"; for that explains nothing; because when you have said "hallucination", the next question that arises is: "What is hallucination?" These hallucinations are very instructive. The fact that they come to people with overstrained nerves is very significant, for it means that the nerve is vibrating at a higher tension, and that if it were possible to get that higher tension without loss of physical health we should make a distinct step forward in evolution, so far as normal vision is concerned.

We now come to another class of cases where the nature of the clairvoyance is what we call "astral", the foregoing being classed under the head of "etheric". Under the heading of "astral vision" you will have a large number of those appearances of people at the moment of death, or shortly before or after it, together with a large number of other phenomena, the seeing of thought-forms, and so on; and among these will come that very curious phenomenon called "second sight", the more significant because it generally, although not invariably, takes place with people who are somewhat uncultivated, whose intelligence is not very highly developed, and in whom the emotional character somewhat predominates over the intellectual. In such a person the astral body will be very active, and readily thrown into violent vibration. Moreover, it will answer readily to vibrations coming to it from outside, when it is itself fairly quiet. Looked at still more closely, we notice that for the most part in the phenomenon of "second sight", you do not get what we Theosophists should speak of as definite and clear astral vision. You have a vibration in the astral body which is somewhat general in its character, rather than an action of those centres in the astral body which are specially connected with astral vision. But you do have action in the astral centres connected with the physical eye, and that is an interesting point; for you must remember that the physical sense organs have astral counterparts, astral centres which are not the same as those we call distinctively the astral "chakras", or wheels. These astral chakras are the organs of the astral body as such, and are used for clear vision, etc., on the astral plane, as the physical eye is used for clear vision on the physical plane; but the others that I have called simply "astral centres" are centres connected with the physical organs. They are not distinctively astral, although they are aggregations of astral matter in the astral body. They do not receive direct impressions of astral happenings, which are then clearly seen and responded to on the astral plane; they do receive astral vibrations which, being once taken into them pass on to the physical centres with which they are in communication, so that they are of the nature of connecting bridges between the astral and physical planes, and are not developed astral senses in the proper sense of the term. Second sight belongs to these - a movement in the astral sense centres which passes on to the physical sight; and there is one characteristic thing which points to this difference, and that is that second sight is largely symbolical; it is not often the record of a distinct happening, but a symbolical presentation of that which is going to happen. Some Highlander sees a number of his neighbours pass by him, perhaps on a certain day in the year when it is supposed that anyone who will die during the year will be seen - and seen how? With a shroud round him; and the height to which the shroud is raised over the figure is taken as representing the time which will elapse before that person will die. It is symbolical; it is not a scene of what is actually taking place on the astral plane, but the perceiver, who does see what is going on, transmits his knowledge in this curious symbolical way. Where you get clear vision, there will be a seeing of the thing as it takes place, and that is not usually, although it is sometimes, put under this heading of second sight - where a person, for instance, sees a sinking ship with a loved one on board, or where any distinct vision of that kind is obtained. Pass a step farther in clairvoyance, and you come to mental clairvoyance, the coming down into the physical brain of vibrations from the mental plane; but this usually happens in the case of genius. You come across it largely in connection with painters. The painter sees and tries to reproduce, and the greater the

genius of the painter the greater will be his disgust at his imperfect representation of what he has seen in the moment of inspiration. Now that cannot be called astral clairvoyance, but rather mental clairvoyance. Closely connected with that is a subtle form of clairvoyance which enables a person to recognise a truth and a principle; where a scientific man suddenly sees one principle which unites and explains a large number of facts. When he catches sight of an underlying law which classifies and renders orderly a chaos of observations, that man is, unconsciously to himself, using a very beautiful form of mental clairvoyance, and it is in a very literal sense of the term that he sees, although he himself would not recognise it as sight.

We find, then, an etheric clairvoyance which can be reached by a slight strain on the ordinary vision; which can be reached also by unbalancing the normal healthy relation between the muscular and nervous systems, and which comes about very readily in cases of nervous tension and overstrain. Then we find the purely astral clairvoyance, which may be symbolical and more or less vague, but which may be, by training, precise, definite, and clear. And all these cases I have been taking are cases in which I am thinking of the person as being in what you would roughly call his normal state; that is, he is not in a trance, and when astral vision is developed by careful methods; by deliberately adopted means, then you will have this astral vision going hand in hand with ordinary physical vision, so that you practically have an expansion of sight. I mean that the man in the normal state will then see all the people round him, but will see in addition the astral people; so that the world to him will be far more thickly populated, as he will see the astral crowds intermingling with the physical, the normal consciousness being in full play, no kind of blinding of that consciousness being necessary to observe the astral phenomena.

You may have astral, and even mental, vision induced in very ordinary people by certain means which throw them into trance; and this is very interesting, because if you can evolve from persons in trance faculties which in their waking state they do not possess, you show the presence of those faculties in the people, and then it is only a question of evolution, how soon those faculties will appear in the normal way. There are many cases known to some of us where trained clairvoyance has followed the stimulation of the astral faculties by means of the mesmeric trance. Under these conditions the person would become “lucid”, able to see in trance. That, repeated over and over again, will very often cause such a development of the astral faculties as to enable that person first to throw himself into the trance and see, and secondly to see without going into the trance condition at all; so that you get in that case the three definite stages; clairvoyance when thrown by another into trance; clairvoyance when thrown by himself into trance; and lastly, clairvoyance so established in the person by practice that it appears without the trance at all, in the normal condition of the waking-consciousness. That seems to me specially interesting, because it is so common; so many people become lucid in the mesmeric trance. I should like to give you one case which seems to me interesting and significant, because of the people concerned, and also because of its triviality; so that all questions of thought-transference are entirely put on one side. It happened to my friend, the late Charles Bradlaugh. As you all know, he was not a believer in any life outside this life. He was a materialist in the philosophic sense of the term, an unbeliever in the existence of the human soul; but he was also a very strong mesmerist and performed a considerable number of rather remarkable cures. At one time he was rather fond of experiments with this mesmeric power of his. He did not understand it, but he was an open-minded man and could not deny the facts which took place under his own observation. He used occasionally to mesmerise his wife, and at one time he threw her into trance when they were both many hundreds of miles away from London. In the trance his wife used to become “lucid”, which greatly puzzled him. Throwing her thus into the trance condition, he asked her to go to London - he used to use these phrases as they produced the desired effect, although he did not believe they represented the facts - and to go to the office of the *National Reformer*, and tell him what she saw there. Presently she said she was in the office of the *National Reformer*, and then, remaining silent for a moment or two, she suddenly called out: “Oh! the stupid woman, she has put the ‘R’ in upside down.” Next morning, the proofs arrived by post. When he came to this particular proof, he found the

letter turned upside down exactly as she had stated had been done by the woman compositor, and that always remained with him an unexplained fact. He knew it was true. He certainly did not know of the setting up of the article, nor of the woman turning the letter upside down in one of the words, so that thought-transference was entirely excluded; and yet there remained the very material fact that the proof contained the trivial error which had been observed by his wife hundreds of miles away the day before in the condition of trance. To me, that is a valuable instance because of the people concerned, who did not believe, and because there is no other explanation possible except that she really saw that which she said she saw. There, of course, you have clairvoyance at a distance in a state of trance, and if you can get it in trance there is no reason why you should not have it out of the state of trance. In throwing persons into a trance we have merely rendered them insensitive to the strong vibrations of the physical plane, so that the delicate vibrations to which normally they are insensitive become the only vibrations able to effect them; and it is very easy to understand how that happens. If you were in the tumult of Covent Garden Market you would not clearly follow a very delicate tune softly played on the violin; but in the middle of the night that same tune, played no more loudly, would be perfectly distinct, and every note would fall clearly on the ear. That is exactly what happens to the perceiver when his body is entranced. The vibrations that normally strike on him, but are drowned by the tumultuous vibrations of the physical plane, strike on him when these tumultuous vibrations are still. While in trance, he is insensible to these physical vibrations; you cannot make him feel, or see, or hear. Being insensitive to these, he can become sensitive to the subtle vibrations that otherwise are drowned. It is not that they normally do not reach him; it is that he does not observe them, and a man is only conscious of that which he observes. If, then, in the trance condition, it is possible to gain this from most people, surely it is a fair presumption that these faculties are in a rudimentary condition in man today. If evolution be true, and if Nature's powers are not exhausted, and if we are not so perfect that no higher perfection can be imagined than the possession of five senses, then it is surely not impossible that these acuter senses are in a rudimentary stage within us at the present moment, and in the course of evolution will evolve in all of us. The idea I want to impress upon you is that these things are on the line of evolution; they are not supernatural but perfectly natural, only not as common now as they will be in the future.

The same is true of clairaudience. We have, with respect to that, two famous historical examples mentioned by Mr. Myers, when dealing with this particular kind of hearing - interesting because historical, and because the evidence is so undeniable. I refer, of course, to the cases of Socrates and of Joan of Arc. The case of Socrates is interesting, because of the nature of the communications he received. He saw nothing, but heard a voice, and the voice only interfered with him when he was either going wrong, or when the action he was going to take would have prevented something happening that was useful. As you know, he has left a number of these cases on record, two of which seem to me to be of the profoundest interest: one, the famous case where a man, sitting at supper with him, was proposing to commit an assassination known to no one in the room except himself; the man rose from the table, and the voice spoke to Socrates to stop him, and he did stop him, and kept him still sitting there. A second time the man rose to go, and a second time the voice called the attention of Socrates, and again he stopped him. On the third time he rose the voice remained silent, and the man, determined as he was to go after a double warning - for Socrates on each occasion had told him the voice had spoken - went to his doom. The other case comes near his own death. His speech has been handed down to us. He said a voice, which generally interfered when he was going to make a mistake, did not interfere with him when going down to the place where he made the speech which led to his death; and while he was making his speech and saying things which provoked his sentence, the voice remained silent; so that when he got to the end of that speech which meant his condemnation, he declared that, as the voice had not interrupted, it meant that death was no evil, - surely one of the most splendid conclusions ever drawn by a human brain on the policy of a "supernatural" happening. He recognised what it meant: that death was only a passage to a higher state, which was not to be avoided.

The other case - that of Joan of Arc - must be familiar to all of you; but the interesting point of it is that you have the whole thing in a legal form - the evidence of the woman herself, knowing that her evidence threatened her with death; the cross-examination by the subtlest minds in order that her testimony might be shaken; the examination carried on day after day, repeated over and over again, in case, by any possibility, she could be forced to a retraction or contradiction; the clinging to it right through that terrible trial; and when, giving way in a moment of weakness, she denied it, coming back to it again and reiterating the reality of the voices she heard. There you have definite, clear, repeated testimony. The reality you might prove by the facts of her life; by the fact that the untrained peasant girl did the things the voices commanded her to do. When you put the evidence given under such mental stress side by side with the splendid deeds of her life before the trial, then, it seems to me, you get a mass of evidence impossible to shake, evidence of the most important and convincing kind which could be put forward before any jury as proving the fact alleged.

Recognising, then, that these facts are so, let us look, before leaving them, at a certain danger connected with them. It is well known that the hearing of voices is one of the commonest signs of impending insanity. When people begin to hear voices, the mad-doctors shake their heads; and in a way it is, of course, a sign of danger, and means an overstrained nervous system which may pass readily into insanity. But leaving that aside, what is it such people bear? They are hearing voices from the astral plane. But you may say: “They often say very foolish things.” But do not you hear foolish things said on the physical plane? I do not think any things heard spoken by the astral voices are more profoundly silly than many of the things said day after day by people on the physical plane. Sometimes a voice gives an incitement to crime. That is a very interesting question. A person with still enough hold over himself to realise the danger says: “I feel a terrible impulse to murder some one.” If you ask him: “Is it any particular person?” He will say: “No.” The utter irrationality of that inclination to commit a murder without motive is very naturally put down as a sign of madness; and certainly a person in that condition should be under control, since he readily passes from the prompting of the voice to the execution of the deed.

Whence come these promptings? They are often nothing more than this: that some one who has committed a murder has been, by the folly of our law, thrown on to the astral plane, when he should be within the walls of a prison, and is left there free to roam about, trying to get others to repeat his crime. It is a characteristic of the criminal that he repeats over and over again in his astral body the crime which has sent him out of the world. Repeating this time after time in the astral body, he will try to impress it upon some one who seems a likely person to respond, and especially upon a person whose energies are overstrained, and who has not, therefore, the normal strength which would make him insensitive to the vibrations. So that you may have this pressure simply coming from a criminal very much alive on the astral plane after he has been hanged here; I may say in passing that the most foolish thing to do with such a man is to hang him. So long as he is in the physical body, being an undeveloped creature, he cannot do much by thought-force, or on the astral plane at all; but, the moment you free him from the physical body his very coarseness and lack of development make him wide-awake on the lowest divisions of the astral plane, whence communication with the physical plane can be most readily made. It is the duty of society to keep him shut up, and it is not right to co-operate with him in his murderous instincts by setting him free. The only possible way to quiet him after setting him free from the physical body is to put him into an astral jail, but it is not always possible to do that; there are conditions which render it generally impracticable, and there is no particular reason for throwing the difficulty on to the astral plane, when it can be so readily dealt with on this side, which is the proper place to try, if possible, in some fashion to improve him.

Leaving that, what does it tell us of the danger? It gives the much needed warning that you should deal with voices and sights which belong to the etheric and astral regions just in the same way as you deal with voices and sights which come to you through your physical organisation. You must get rid of the idea that because a thing comes in an abnormal way it is therefore beautiful and true. It is quite as foolish to follow out

suggestions which come to you from the astral plane without weighing them and judging them, as it would be to walk along Seven Dials or Whitechapel, and follow out any suggestion which might come to you from any of the tramps in those regions. You should subject to your judgment and conscience all things that you see and hear from the other side, and if they do not come out clear from that judgment, then, if they are directions to do a thing, leave them alone; otherwise, the more sensitive you become, by the more dangers will you be continually surrounded. You may experiment, but experiment when there is no danger. There are many things a sensitive person may see and hear which do not matter one way or the other, which will not hurt anybody; those are a fair subject for experiment, for it is only by experiment that you will learn to, distinguish If you hear a voice telling you your friend, who is within easy reach, is in great trouble, and you can, by listening to the suggestions of the voice, and with no more harm than "making a fool of yourself", go and see your friend, there is no harm in doing so. And if you find your friend has no need of you, simply make a note of the facts, and try to analyse them and find out what were the conditions under which you heard or saw, and mistook or were misled. Observe them carefully, keep a note of them, and preserve them for future guidance. But if your friend happens to be in France or Italy, and the journey would be costly and almost impossible, then let it alone, and simply wait for the ordinary method of telegram or post to tell you whether your friend is in trouble or not. And, again, make a record of the true or false impression. Practically it comes to this: use your common-sense in dealing with the astral just as in dealing with the physical world. Do not hold yourself in an atmosphere of awe or reverence, merely because something has come through a sense which at present is rudimentary and undeveloped; for that is the way of credulity and superstition, it is not the way of knowledge and experience.

None the less, remember that along this line is the path of evolution; that humanity is evolving keener and subtler senses; that those senses have been evolved by many in the past, and are being evolved now; that they will come to be normally evolved, when we have reached a little way beyond the stage we occupy at present. Do not put yourself in that most irrational position which you might imagine as occupied some millions of years ago by some blind creature before eyes had been developed, who, when he came across a creature that could distinguish a little between the conditions of darkness and light, simply scoffed at him, or tried to kill him. Remember that you are not perfect, and remember that you are evolving. Hold close to those two undoubted facts: "I am an imperfect being," and "I am a being in a condition of evolution;" then you can utilise any abnormal happenings which you may experience, or which your friends may experience and mention to you. You can look at them without fear, without undue curiosity, without excitement, without losing your head, and thus carefully examining, experiencing, learning, you may be able to quicken your evolution. And if it be better to see physically than to be blind, better to hear physically than to be deaf, better to be able to speak physically than to be dumb, then it is also better to increase the delicacy of those senses and give them a wider area of exercise ; for next to the folly of declaring that these things are not, and the folly of receiving blindly everything you hear, is the folly of saying that these things ought to be discouraged and avoided, when they are in the course of Nature, and mark another stage on the evolutionary road.

TELEPATHY

Let me remind you of the point at which we have arrived in the course of these lectures. We have seen that there is reason to believe that we are living in three distinct worlds: the physical, the astral, and the mental. We have also seen that we are living in these worlds as conscious entities, in bodies that, being made of the matter of these different worlds, relate us respectively to them; so that by means of one of these bodies we are in touch with the physical, by means of another in touch with the astral, and by means of a third with the mental world. We shall need to keep that in mind when studying the special division of our subject today: that of telepathy; for it is by an understanding of the working of these powers that we shall be able to solve many of the problems which are before psychologists on this particular subject, and be able to recognise whether a message comes by way of the physical, the astral, or the mental.

In thinking of ourselves as thus connected with three worlds, we see opening up before us far larger horizons, far vaster possibilities, than perhaps we were accustomed to connect with ourselves in dealing with the narrower bounds of the physical consciousness. We see that we are here in relation to worlds that not only exist for us while we are in touch with the physical, but also exist for us when we have left the physical by death; that just in so far as we have definitely made our connexions with the astral and mental worlds whilst still in the physical body, will the life on the other side of death become comparatively familiar. It is clear that if we are able to communicate by means of telepathy with people in this world while living in it, and with people in other worlds while we are still in this, we have here possibilities of knowledge far transcending anything that we can reach outside what are definitely called “occult” methods - meaning by that phrase in this particular relation the quitting of the physical encasement by the consciousness, and the travelling in other worlds and bringing back to the physical body the knowledge there gained. If we can establish the reality of telepathic communication, we might then come into touch with many living in those worlds, and by a comparison of their various reports might obtain a fairly extended knowledge of them. For we should be able by means of this telepathy, if the fact of it could be proved, to reach regions altogether out of the range of the ordinary spiritualistic investigations, which are admittedly confined to those persons who are still in the intermediate world, and for the most part are recognised as belonging rather to the regions of that world near the physical plane than to those which lie at a greater distance from it. Every one who has had much to do with communications by mediums is well acquainted with the fact that the statement is often made that the communicating entity is passing on into higher regions and will no longer be able to communicate with the world; while, if it be possible to establish this communication by way of the vehicles which are in touch with these different worlds, then people without occult training would still be able to keep in touch with friends passing on into the heavenly realm, and thus would be able to communicate by way of the mind after the lower communications of the physical and astral had been entirely cut off. Clearly this opens up great possibilities; and Mr. Myers did not over-estimate them in the immense stress he laid on telepathy, as a means for extending the reach of our consciousness beyond the range of the physical.

If we would communicate with these different worlds it may be well, for the moment, to pause on the methods of communication, and see what part of us in each case is the vehicle of communication. The first and most obvious means of communication will be from brain to brain - both brains on the physical plane communicating with each other by the ordinary medium of thought present in the waking-consciousness and working in the physical brain.

I was surprised the other day to see the editor of *Truth* state that thought-transference was entirely unscientific; because any one who knows something of the science of the present day ought at least to be prepared to admit its possibility. I am only now saying “possibility”, although I go farther, and say that it lies well within the limit of facts scientifically proven. Any one who knows anything of wireless telegraphy will at

once see that we are face to face with just the same conditions as would justify the idea of thought--transference; that you have started there a series of vibrations through an all-permeating medium, without any need to lay down through that medium ordinary means of communication like wires, and so on. Surely that idea is now so clearly and simply before the minds of newspaper readers that that which is closely analogous to it in principle cannot be said to be outside scientific possibility, or in any sense antagonistic to it. For it is well within the ascertained facts of science that thought action in the brain goes on side by side with electric or magnetic action, these magnetic currents increasing with hard thinking. And this altogether outside the later investigations in France, with regard to what are called the "N" rays; as to which, of course, some scientific people are still in doubt. So that you have to deal with the fact that something of the nature of electric action accompanies thought, and that we are still within ordinary scientific experience when we state the possibility of these vibrations being conveyed through the ether without wires, or other dense connections. For it is not necessary to go beyond the ether in order to deal with the transference of thought currents generated in one brain and received in another. I doubt whether, for the sending of messages from brain to brain, it is absolutely necessary to utilise that special organ for thought-transference, the pineal gland, which is developed in many cases by certain occult methods, and then used for the sending of messages from the physical brain.

That which science regards simply as the remains of a third or central eye has possibilities in the future from the standpoint of the occult investigator as well as a history in the past. It is in the pineal gland, more highly developed than at present, that we find the brain organ which acts as a generating instrument in the brain that sends the thought, and as a receiving instrument in the brain to which that thought is transmitted. But apart from that, ordinary thinking, if it be clear, definite, and strongly sustained, would cause quite enough action in the ordinary brain-cells to send out vibrations into space which could be received by an instrument tuned somewhat to the same pitch. This relation of the transmitting and receiving instrument is not without importance, for in order to make the experiments as easy as possible, it is well for two people to begin the practice who are in some close and sympathetic relation the one to the other, such as husband and wife, or members of the same family.

Leaving that for a moment, let us see along what other lines it is possible that thoughts might be transmitted. It would be possible to transmit them from the intermediate body between the mental and physical - the astral; but in order that thought might be clearly and definitely transmitted from astral body to astral body, it would need that the astral development should have been carried to a fairly high pitch. Supposing that the astral body is at the stage when it is fit to be used as a vehicle of consciousness, then there would be no difficulty in the transmission of the thought.

Going one stage higher, to the mental body, there is again a possibility of thought-transference of an exceedingly effective kind, if the thought body be sufficiently developed to be used in this way. So that there are these three ways along which a thought message may go: from brain to brain; from astral body to astral body; and from mental body to mental body; you have here varieties which may explain certain phenomena in thought-transference, as to which explanation has not been very definitely given by our ordinary psychologists, and may explain why - as in case I shall take in a moment - you may get more from a person receiving information than is consciously sent by the transmitter, working in the physical waking-consciousness.

Before taking up that point, there is another of considerable importance that I would like to touch upon. It is this: that in many cases in which a thought is sent to you, you may not have that thought reproduced as a thought; it may also be reproduced as a vision, or as a voice. Suppose that you send a thought of a very simple character to a friend - a thought about some object. It might arrive as an idea. You have thought, for instance, of a person, and the idea of that person has asserted itself in the consciousness of the one to whom

you had sent the thought. But it might be equally possible that instead of the person receiving the idea of the person thought of, he would hear that person's name, or see a picture of that person; and naturally the question arises: "Why and how is that?" It depends upon the receiver, not on the sender, and allies itself at once with extremely familiar phenomena with which every one of you will be well acquainted, with regard to the passage of an electric current.

For instance, the first time I ever saw experiments in wireless telegraphy in Calcutta by Professor Bose, the generating instrument was placed in one room, and the spectators, including myself, put ourselves some three rooms away. In the room in which we were, Professor Bose had made a number of arrangements. He had arranged a chemical cell, in which an electric current would cause chemical action; he had arranged a wire, in which an electric current would cause the shining out of a light; he had arranged a pistol which would be fired off by the passage of the electric current; and he had also arranged that a heavy weight should be made to fall when the current passed. Professor Bose generated his current, and all these vibrations must have come throbbing into the room where we were; for suddenly the chemical action took place; the light shone out; the pistol went off; and the weight fell to the ground - all these things took place each according to the special arrangement which had been made to receive and give effect in different ways to the same electrical vibrations, and in this case each one of the results was conditioned by the nature of the apparatus which the electric current touched.

Carry that on into the cases of thought-transference, and you will see exactly how it works. The person who most easily receives impressions by way of the ear would be very likely to hear the name of the person thought of; an artist, or one accustomed to visualise, would probably see the face of the person. Each would react in his own particular way. You have simply sent out the thought-vibration, and the person catches the thought according to his most sensitive apparatus. And this, again, is a thing that joins itself with the knowledge of your own nervous apparatus; for you know perfectly well that the sensory nerves, if pressed or injured, answer to that injury by their own particular sense peculiarity. If you press your eye-ball, the pressure is received on the retina as light, although the pressure of your finger was not a generator of light in the ordinary sense of the term. Each nerve answers according to its own fashion; the optic nerve will give you light; the auditory nerve will give you sound. The "spiritual sound" which the Hatha Yogi believes himself to be listening to is an instance in point. He draws in his breath in a particular way, and the effect of drawing in his breath in this way and holding it is to cause a certain pressure upon the auditory nerve; and this pressure shows itself as sound. Every one inclined to try to develop any of the powers connected with the astral or mental plane will do well, before he begins to try, to make himself acquainted with ordinary physiological facts, if he wishes to avoid continual confusion between physiological phenomena and those of the higher planes.

Understanding, then, these possibilities, you may go forward more safely in trying to understand the abnormal happenings. And let me now take a particular case of thought-transference which I have chosen because of its peculiarity. I have not troubled you hitherto in these lectures with a number of cases, because I thought you could always find them for yourselves; but this particular one I want to borrow from Mr. Myers, because it works out in such a satisfactory fashion, both for what might be expected by the ordinary student, but still more by what might not be expected, and which seems at first sight to be quite irrational. It is a series of experiments conducted by a San Francisco doctor and his wife. The doctor is apparently a Theosophist, his wife a sceptic. This is an advantage, because results which come by a sceptic are much more satisfactory than results which come by a believer, as they shut out all notions that the believer hypnotised himself. This gentleman and his wife were about a hundred miles apart, and the first message sent by his wife was very simple and straightforward. She was thinking it in her waking brain-consciousness. It might be supposed that the receiver should get exactly the words sent, but no:

May 12. *Transmitter*, *Mrs. S.* Arrived safely. Pleasant trips. B. feels fairly well. - We have a nice place in an old-fashioned house.	*May* 12. *Received*. Had a good trip. B. slept well. House squarely built and plain; porch surrounded by trees; not fronting the road; rooms very sunny (all accurate. What follows was seen clairvoyantly, apparently. - ED.) Landlady wears sun bonnet with jacket of same. Little boy three years old. (Boy expected but did not arrive till next day. The description accurate). Fire in north-east. (Fire occurred next night).
May 13. *Transmitter*, *Dr. S.* Theresa B. and her mother were here yesterday; also Clara and Emma. Business somewhat dull. - W's house burnt yesterday.	*May* 13. *Received*. I think Theresa B. was there or is coming. - Something I can't make out about business; I think it is bad.

You have there many additional particulars which are not in the message as sent. Why were they received? If you apply what I told you about the three roads, you will easily realise that the additional particulars were not sent by the brain-consciousness, but run along the other roads, for these facts were thoroughly accurate. The landlady was as described, and had been seen by the transmitter of the message, so that the facts transmitted were in her consciousness, although not deliberately sent by way of the brain. These peculiarities run through the whole of the numerous experiments. You are continually finding more received than was transmitted, but in some cases less.

For instance: "Theresa B. and her mother were here yesterday." It would appear as though the messages sent by the wife arrived better, or were better received than the messages sent by the husband, either because she thought more definitely, or because the husband was more receptive. All that was received was: "I think Theresa B. was there or is coming, and something I cannot make out about business, and I think it is bad."

I should think a large part of the above message was received through the astral body, rather than through the physical brain. It lacks the sharpness and clearness of the message that goes from brain to brain. It is an impression more than a message.

There is a negative result on the following day. Nothing was sent on one side, and "Forgot to keep the appointed time" on the other. And it is curious that in cases where there is a failure *both* seem to have fallen into forgetfulness.

Then comes a thing which seems quite irrational. "B. does not seem well at all. Went for medicine." What was received was this: "See a lot of wine casks and demijohns. Something about curtains." That does not seem a very successful message. Go a little further, and what do we find? Mrs. S. had visited a large wine cellar, and also the curtains in her room had annoyed her very much, but although she said nothing, the impression which was made had gone off without the brain taking part in the transmission. The annoyance about the curtains is

an exceedingly interesting and significant fact; the astral vibration of annoyance going along its astral path was sufficiently strong to overbear the message sent by the physical brain, and to enforce itself as the proper message on the mind of the receiver.

We come shortly to another case which is very interesting, because the receiver is more accurate than the transmitter:

May 20. *Transmitter, Mrs. S.*	*May* 20. *Received*.
My clothes and shoes are all torn: I have poison oak on my arms. - Hope it will not be bad.	You went out riding. - I see you holding a shoe in your hand. You have poison oak on your right arm. B. is better. - You want me to mail you the *Bulletin and Chronicle*. (Mrs. S. did ride out to some sulphur springs. Poison oak was on right arm only. B. gained three pounds. She was hoping for the *Bulletin* supplement only).

Then appears, on the comparison of notes, that the poison was only on one arm, and not on both, as the transmitter had stated, and the one receiving it saw a picture of the right arm and the injury which that right arm had undergone.

Now those cases are about as definite and clear a proof of thought-transference as you could want. You have the very close sending and receiving; the addition, in several cases, of more than was intended to be sent; but in every case the additional thing was present in the consciousness of the sender. And then you have the most curious case of all, where the sender sends a message of injury to both arms, and the receiver receives the idea, of only one arm being injured, and *that* the one on which the injury was really inflicted. The case puzzles me on one point. I do not see why the statement of the double injury was sent in the ordinary waking-consciousness. A possible explanation would be that the sender was frightened and slightly hysterical, and did not recognise the limitation of the injury. But I would rather leave that for the moment as one in which the *modus operandi* is not quite clear. This is only one case out of hundreds. It would be better for you, if you happen to be interested in this line of investigation, to make your own experiments, rather than rely on the records of experiments of someone else. But there is one word of warning, and that is that you must not be too rigid in laying down the laws, or the conditions, under which yon insist that your phenomena shall take place. I know that the ordinary person of the scientific turn of mind will at once say: “You are opening the gate to all kinds of fraud. We must lay down strict test conditions.” Yes, if you know the whole of the laws at work you may; but until you do know the conditions, it is perfect folly to lay down conditions out of your own ignorance, and then complain that the phenomena do not happen under “test conditions”. Let me borrow an illustration which will show you how absurdly this thing works out.

A photographer is said to have gone into the middle of China, before photography was known there, and offered to take pictures by the sunlight. Every one laughed at him; for how was it possible for the sun to make pictures? It was clear that he was a fool. But further examination into his methods showed that he was less a fool than a knave. The whole of his procedure was an endeavour to delude the people. The first thing he did for his picture-making was to put a black cloth over the box; and it was clear that he could easy introduce under that cloth any number of pictures ready made. The fact that he insisted on putting it over the camera

showed that he desired to cheat. He further insisted on bringing in a closed case which nobody was allowed to open, to see whether pictures were not concealed within it. He would not let any one look into that case, so as to prove there were no pictures there, and he insisted on putting it into the camera under the black cloth. Of course, you can see at once that he cannot make pictures, unless he puts them into his little closed case beforehand, and slips them into the camera under a cloth when nobody is allowed to look. Clearly he is a fraud. And then, when he pretends he has got his pictures, what does he do? Does he open the bog and show them? No! He wraps up his little case in the black cloth and carries it off into a room into which no sunlight is allowed to enter, although he pretends he is making pictures by the sun. As if the sunlight that is said to make the pictures should not be allowed to enter in where they are! So, in order to prove that he was able to take a picture by sunlight; they laid down as the test conditions that he should do it in an open box, and that everybody who liked should examine his plates to show that there were no pictures concealed. Nor must he go into a dark-room, and talk to them about “developing”. They were far too clever people to be cheated in that bare-faced manner; and he was a miserable fraud. Such was the decision; but, of course, under those “test conditions” they did not get any pictures.

That is exactly what people do when investigating this kind of phenomenon. They say certain conditions must be laid down. In vain does the unfortunate person, who knows the thing to be true, state that those conditions render the happening of the thing impossible. You must make your experiments, if you are quite ignorant, under every possible condition; and gradually, when you obtain your results freely, you can change your conditions bit by bit, and mark the point at which the results disappear. Then you will be likely to be on the track of a fair knowledge. For nature does not make her conditions to fit the theories either of scientific men or of Psychical Researchers. She brings about the happenings in her own way, and those who want to find them out have to take them as nature gives them, and not according to the conditions that they think are the proper ones under which they should happen. “Nature is conquered by obedience” is the great rule of the scientific investigator. She is not conquered by dictation. Ordinary science has gone so far that many discoveries may be made along the lines of previous investigations, and scientists forget how much of previous investigation lies behind the lines of investigation they are now carrying on. It is easy now for a chemist to follow out certain definite lines, but the earlier chemical discoveries were not made in that fashion. Roger Bacon, you find, experimented all over the place. He just put different things together and noticed what happened - not a very comfortable way of building the foundation of modern chemistry; for he leaves it on record as the result: “I was stretched several times on the floor of my cell.” “I lost a finger,” and so on. Those early chemists mutilated themselves in seeking the conditions of nature’s workings. They simply tried tentatively. Sometimes, something carried off a finger; sometimes, they were stretched insensible; but after that, they were able gradually to work out the conditions of the happening. If they had waited to make their experiments until they knew the conditions, chemical science would not be in its present position.

Now, as regards these psychical happenings, you are rather in the condition of Roger Bacon. You must experiment and face the results of your experiment; and if you are not prepared to face them, leave it alone, since there is no duty upon anybody to find out laws of nature. You can study in perfect safety in the realms of discovered laws. But if you want to discover, you must take your courage in both hands and go boldly on experimenting; and note what happens. After a time you will be able to eliminate the unnecessary happenings.

That is how Sir William Crookes experimented, and thereby he gained very remarkable results; while every one around him was saying that the fact that materialisations could only take place in the dark was a clear proof that the materialisation was a fraud, he, the truly scientific man, accepted temporarily the statement which was made, and set himself to invent a sort of lamp, the light-vibrations from which would not be of the character that would shiver the materialisation into pieces. And then he found out that by means of this particular light that he invented, he was able to hold up his lamp and examine the materialisation and the form of the medium at the same time. But he did that, remember, not by saying materialisations ought to take place

in daylight; but by quietly accepting the fact that they did not, and then going on to try to find the least destructive kind of light. That is the road of the true scientific man, who does not lay down the law to begin with, but observes the fact, and then tries to devise means whereby the observation may be made more accurate, and thereby more satisfactory.

Take, then, those suggestions as a guide to your own investigations; and so far as thought-transference is concerned there is not the slightest danger in experimenting. The only thing you need to remember is do not always do the same thing - at least, if you are the receiver of the messages; because in order to receive the message you must make yourself exceedingly passive. Passivity on the part of the receiver is as necessary as positivity on the part of the sender, so it is not wise to always play the receiver's part. It is not good, in a mixed world, to be too receptive to everything, that comes along; and if you practise too much receiving without sending, you will become exceedingly sensitive to every vibration about you, and will be receiving messages which you do not in the least want. You must guard yourself against over-receptivity. In every way it is a danger to people, especially when living under the conditions of a modern civilisation. For remember that all we call "public opinion" is for the most part thought-transference. The opinions that you form are more the opinions of others than they are your own. You catch them from stronger thinkers in every department of life. If you think along one line, it is because Mr. Balfour, or Mr. Chamberlain is thinking along it. They are sending out powerful thought-currents which are caught up by brain after brain. Every brain adds a little strength to the thought-current, and so these thought-currents increase; you do not want to be too receptive to them. The man who would form his own opinions must keep, as it were, the key to his own brain, choosing the thoughts he will allow to enter; and shutting out the thoughts he wishes to shut out. When you want to understand a question; open your mind to all the most opposite opinions and let them all flow into the mind, and then judge for yourselves the value; but do not let yourself drift along the thought-current and reproduce continuously your favourite politician or newspaper. That sort of public opinion is of small value in a nation; and if this nation is to be truly great, then the thought-atmosphere needs to be filled with vigorous, independent, and carefully formed thoughts, and not be the mere atmosphere of echoes that it is today; for echoes sound best in an empty cave, and thoughts are echoed best, very often, from an empty brain.

Do not forget, however, that in addition to these thought-currents on the physical plane, you will do well to open yourselves up to the currents that come from the higher planes. Do not forget that by the practice of meditation which I have so often advocated, the setting apart of a little time every morning before your brain is active and your thoughts busy, for the quiet thinking over of a noble thought, and then the opening up of your brain and your higher bodies to thought vibrations from above, so that you may gain knowledge that otherwise you could not gain, that you may climb into realms of ideas which otherwise you would be unable to penetrate. For one thing that keeps back our progress more, perhaps, than any other, is that we do not realise our inner inherent greatness. If you would only think of yourselves as living more out of this world than in it; if you would try to realise what I know I have often said before, that your birthplace is the mental plane and not the physical, that your native atmosphere is the atmosphere of ideas and not that of physical phenomena; if you would realise that by birthright you belong to that higher world, and that all that is necessary is to give time and thought to come into communication with it, how much more splendid would become your lives, how much swifter your evolution. It is not as though you had to create a medium of communication you do not possess; all you have to do is to throw into active working power apparatus already built up in the numberless incarnations that lie behind, and only awaiting the necessary touch to throw it into movement. Your mental body at the present stage of human evolution is no mere cloudy thing; it is definite and organised, even although its organisation will go much farther than it has yet reached. Your astral body - in the most of you who are fairly cultured, who are reasonable and thoughtful - is an organism which is ready to work to a very considerable extent, if only you will make for it an opportunity. But if you are always rushing down into the physical vehicle, if you accustom yourself to work only through the brain, how is it possible for you then to

know those subtler workings of the higher vehicles, those messages which come from above, and which might so ineffably illuminate your waking-consciousness? Books, truly, give us one way of gaining knowledge; but greater than any book, surer than any printed leaves, more illuminating than any teacher who teaches with the lips and voice, are those messages that may come to you from the higher worlds in which you are living all the time, though your attention is not turned to them. All that I say to you is that you should turn your attention in that direction; that out of the greedy claims of the world today you should take if it be but one brief quarter-of-an-hour to turn your attention to the higher worlds to which you so much more really belong. Do it, and you will find that those vibrations will gradually, slowly, assert themselves in consciousness. At first it may be a dim illumination, an insight into the meaning of favourite books which you never enjoyed before, a grasping of the ideas of your author beyond anything that in your normal study you had found; and then you will know that thought-transference is going on from the higher mental worlds down to the physical brain, and that you are coming into touch with the mind and not only with the brain-consciousness of others. But if in this world you cannot gain knowledge, even by the brain, without turning your attention to the things you study, then how shall it be that, in trying to understand the knowledge of higher worlds, you shall gain that without turning your attention to it, and that those subtle vibrations shall assert themselves in your brain, when you will not even for a few minutes free the brain for their reception?

METHODS OF UNFOLDMENT

I propose tonight to say something about the methods of unfoldment, meaning by that the way in which people may develop themselves as to the inner man, and so gradually acquire certainty and knowledge where at present they are puzzled and bewildered. For this New Psychology that we have been dealing with will never be thoroughly understood until people can “see”, and trace out that which gives rise to those many phenomena which are put together under the title of coming from “the unconscious”, without any kind of explanation.

In the course of these lectures I have tried to show the different sources whence these phenomena arise, so that theoretically, as it were, you may be able for yourselves to classify them - to say, as you read about this or that phenomenon: “That belongs to such-and-such a part of the nature of things; this to another part,” and so on. But it is much more satisfactory, if instead of simply taking the theory to work upon and applying it, you are able, by your own perceptive ability, to decide when any new case arises, what is its real source. Therefore it seems to me useful to put before you certain lines of possible development, and the more useful, perhaps, because some of these lines are undesirable and dangerous; whereas others have been, if not perfectly successful, at least useful to those who practise them in quickening their development, even if in the present incarnation they have not time to complete the work.

We must first consider what it is which is to be developed; because the method will depend on the part of the nature in which development is sought. And we see that along two main lines human evolution will inevitably go - one the side of consciousness, the other that of the vehicles. The consciousness itself will be greatly unfolded, and show out a deeper, clearer insight, a fuller and firmer grasp. So that we shall have to deal with methods of development as applied to the consciousness. And that is in the most literal sense of the term a question of unfoldment; because the consciousness has all these possibilities existing within it, and it is only a question of bringing them to the surface, just as a bud may unfold into the perfect flower. But it is not only a question of the development of consciousness in which we are interested; because as the consciousness unfolds on one plane after another, it does not thereby follow that the consciousness will be able from the higher planes to directly affect the physical brain, so as to bring about effects in what we call the waking-consciousness. For it is quite possible for a person to be so developed that both as regards the consciousness and the higher bodies they may be active on their own planes; and yet the knowledge acquired there may not be brought down into the physical mind and “remembered”. But when the consciousness is developed so as to be able to work, then comes in the question of the vehicles in which it is to work, the various bodies which it uses; and we are concerned with only three of those, for if three of them are in active working order, the possessor does not need further physical instruction to learn anything of the value or practice of unfoldment. If a man has control of his physical, astral, and mental bodies, he can gain for himself the knowledge that comes out of what the psychologists call the “unconscious”, and from the higher and valuable side of it, the super-conscious. But it is rarely that there will come down, at the present stage of evolution, information from the consciousness above the mental body. Of course it does happen in the case of the genius, for there are many cases of genius in which the illumination comes from the causal body, the lasting treasure-house in which all memories are stored. It may also occur in the case of those who, by gradual evolution and definite practice, have perfected their outer vehicles so that they are able to work in the causal body. Mostly, however, and for our purpose entirely, these three lower bodies are those with which we are concerned; and we want to know how to unfold our consciousness; how to improve our physical body; how to bring the astral body into working order; and how to do the same for the mental body; so that on the side of consciousness the powers may be unfolded, and on the side of the forms, the organs whereby these powers express themselves.

Now along some methods of evolution all the force is directed to the vehicles, while the unfolding of consciousness is left unattended to; and where that is the case the results are peculiarly unsatisfactory, because the person may be developed as to the psychic senses, which may yet remain practically useless, because, although they are developed as organs, the consciousness is not ready to work through them. It is an artificial forcing. Instead of the consciousness bringing about the evolution and presiding over the building, it is possible to some extent to force the evolution of the organs, and take them, as it were, ahead of the evolution of consciousness; so that people may see and hear many things which they do not in the least understand. And that is most often the case when people are born "psychics" - people who have developed these qualities in previous lives. Generally, where people are not very highly evolved and yet are born with these psychic powers, they have in previous lives devoted themselves to the methods which work upon the bodies, leaving the consciousness unattended to; the result is considerable psychic development, but the unevolved consciousness being unable to use these powers intelligently, they are of comparatively little value, and more an annoyance than a treasure to their possessor. Such people are by no means to be envied; and if they end themselves possessed of powers that they do not know how to use, and which tend to disturb and distress them, bringing into their life a number of phenomena which they do not understand and cannot control, the only thing such people can wisely do is to set themselves to the deliberate unfolding on the side of consciousness, and so make up in this life what they have failed to do in a previous one.

I think we shall most readily follow the methods of unfoldment, if I put briefly, first, the theory as it is held, especially in India, where these things have been studied for thousands of years; and secondly, the methods we find recommended amongst ourselves today; we may then see to which of these two great divisions of unfoldment the methods amongst ourselves belong. It is always advisable to have a complete theory, because then, when a new thing comes along you have a niche in which to put it, and as no such theory exists in the West just now, we must go to the East for one, and see how it bears upon things happening among ourselves.

In the ordinary psychological science of India - a psychology many thousands of years old - there are two great forms of Yoga; the Hatha Yoga, and the Raja Yoga; and under these two divisions all development naturally and inevitably falls. The theory of Hatha Yoga is this: that on the whole it is easiest to begin with the physical body, because then you are dealing with a thing of which you at least know something. That, starting with your physical body, you can bring it under control to a well-nigh incredible extent; that, as the physical body corresponds in its various parts to the organs of the higher bodies, it is possible to reach those organs of the higher bodies by stimulating the organs in the lower; so that, starting with the physical eye, you would gradually develop, going upwards, the corresponding organs in the astral body, thus developing clairvoyance; that, starting with the physical ear, you can, by stimulating that, bring about a corresponding growth in the astral body, and so hear things on the astral plane. That theory of correspondence is perfectly true. Our senses are not really in the physical body but in the astral, and the centres of those senses are in the astral body. All sight on the physical plane, before it conveys any knowledge to the inner man, the perceiver, passes from the retina back to the optic centres in the brain, and from those in the astral body, to the corresponding centres which are really the centres of the senses. The brain is merely like a telegraph wire along which the message goes; you see by the stimulation of these astral centres. That is the first thing to remember. But Hatha Yoga includes much more than the stimulation of the senses. It includes a complete control over every part of the physical body, so that all the muscles, voluntary and involuntary, are all brought under the control of the will. The Hatha Yogi goes through a number of processes, many of them extremely troublesome and even painful, in order to bring under the control of the will every portion of his physical body; and, being taught also the correspondence in the astral body, he works up from one to the other in the way I described with respect to sight and hearing.

There are in India a considerable number of these Hatha Yogis, who are willing to show off their powers. They can do some very extraordinary things. They can stop the beating of the heart, or the working of the lungs, and

many other things of that sort. And it is rather surprising until you know how it is done. Only when you have done all this, the question arises: “Of what use?” Is it worth while to go through this long training in order to do things that, after all, you do not really want to do? The only thing in which you may say there is some use is with regard to the seeing, hearing, and feeling on the astral plane; and that they only attain to a very limited extent, and after the novelty of the thing is over, inevitably the man wants to go further and ask what it means. In many cases they are not able to connect together the centres in the astral body and the organ of the physical senses; so that they do not in many cases succeed in seeing or hearing as far as their brain knowledge is concerned. They go into trance, and when they come out of it they are as wise as when they went into it. Nearly all Hatha Yogis can go into trance; but when they have done it, what happens? Simply this: that the physical and astral bodies are separated. In some cases the astral body is at work, so that as far as that is concerned the man is having experiences, although they cannot be conveyed to the brain-consciousness; still, the fact that it is able to work is an advantage, because much may be learned on the astral plane which will filter down to the physical plane, not as memory, but as knowledge which gradually makes its way through. But in many cases when the physical and astral bodies are separated, the astral stays quite close to the physical, practically useless and asleep. So far as I can find, along that line no very great increase of knowledge is attainable; but one thing they *do* attain, and that is magnificent physical health. They develop a muscular strength and power of endurance, which enable them to carry the body through fatigue which would crush an ordinary man. They also develop, through the difficult nature of the practices they do, and the perseverance necessary to obtain any results, a great power of will.

Now what theory lies behind that, as well as the correspondence between the physical and astral? When we look at it we notice this: that in the course of evolution consciousness has gone a little ahead of organs, and the working of the consciousness has brought about the building of the organ; that is a point of enormous and practical importance. The function of life always precedes the shaping of the organ, the organ being built by the exercise of the function. Tracing on the evolution, the neat thing that strikes one is that as the consciousness develops, as the thinker evolves more and more power of thought, he puts aside one thing after another that he has done by the exercise of his will, handing it on to the automatism of the body, and turning his attention to higher and more useful things. So that when we see the Hatha Yogi bringing again within his conscious control the things that in the course of evolution he has let go, we find he is going backwards instead of forwards, burdening himself again with a number of things which are really done very much better by the automatic mechanism of the body, and on which, if he interferes, he must spend a great deal of trouble in order to reach the same perfection as the mechanism has done by his previous work upon it.

We find we are going backwards also when we come to deal with stimulation of the astral senses in this way; the astral centre was first developed and through that the physical organ of sense, so that to use the physical organ to stimulate the astral centre into independent working is to retrace the path of evolution, and it does not bring out the true sight or hearing in the astral body, but brings into abnormal and undesirable activity those sense centres which have built for their own expression the sense-organ in the physical body; the astral having a set of senses of its own which do not necessarily communicate directly with the organs in the physical body. The astral senses are directly related to the astral plane, whereas the sense-centres are bridges for communication between the thinker and his physical vehicle. You do not want to make those active independently, for they will never serve your purpose thoroughly and completely. You are taking an instrument made for one purpose and clumsily adapting it to another. What you want to do is to evolve in the astral body its own sense-organs, the “charkas”, or “wheels”, which belong to that body as a body, and not to that body as a means of communication between the thinker and his physical vehicle. To stimulate those centres which are bridges, instead of evolving the living “wheels” which are the right organs of the astral body, is a complete blunder; you are falling into an abnormal evolution, and one which is utterly undesirable and likely to be mischievous.

Let us now see what western methods of unfoldment partake of this Hatha Yoga principle: that you are to stimulate the physical body and thus arouse certain powers in the astral. All methods which begin by turning any of the senses to the careful close observation of a physical object are part of this Hatha Yoga method. For instance, the favourite eastern method, which is now being advised for practice over here, is to make a black spot on a white ground and stare at it for hours together. Crystal-gazing is another method which is recommended. I have received a large amount of American literature, suggesting all sorts of things on these lines. All these belong to the Hatha Yoga system; and are fundamentally mischievous, not only because they are going backwards in evolution, but because of their exceedingly injurious effects on the physical organs. One result of gazing at a black spot for hours is that it spoils the sight. The ages of the eyes are often put out of order, producing strabismus, more commonly called squinting. Another thing you find is a gradual dulling of the physical sight, due to the overstrain of the nerves of the retina, which overstraining gradually passes back through the optic nerve to the optic centre, so that after many years of practice atrophy of the optic nerve may arise, causing dimness and even blindness. There is a difference here between the Indian and the Westerner; the Indian does not care about the physical result. the European or American does. When the Indian gets a well-established squint, he is as happy with it as without it. He does not want to look at the things round about him; he has set his mind on something different, and he is not disturbed by the squint. He does not mind even blindness; but the western man minds it very much. Over in India these things are known, but that is not so over here; and it is rather a cruel thing, it seems to me, that systems of that sort should be scattered broadcast all over the West, without any explanation of the dangers that every Indian knows are connected with them. Some few people may get safely through, but many are injured; and even supposing a man does escape these things, and throws himself into a trance; when he comes out of the trance, he is as wise as before; he has simply performed self-hypnotisation, and doing that is of no value to the man who does it. So also with hearing. It is quite possible to hear sounds by breathing in a certain way; but it is only through pressure on the nerves connected with the ear, in the throat. People seem to think that doing this opens up the astral senses. There are many things like that which you can read if you like. But do not practise them; it is better to give them a wide berth. The fact that the people who circulate these things among an ignorant public do not tell of the effects likely to be brought about by these practices may be because they are ignorant; I do not suppose they do it maliciously.

Crystal-gazing, also, leads to nothing but the very lowest order of clairvoyance. I was once very much puzzled by a fact with regard to crystal-gazing. I happen to know one of our members who has developed astral sight to a remarkable extent, and I asked him one day, for my information and amusement, to look in a crystal and tell me what he saw. He gazed at it, and turned it in all sorts of ways, but not a solitary thing could he see, although he worked at it for some time. The reason of this is quite clear when you come to think about it. The vision of the psychically developed man is not a vision which comes through a stimulation of the sense centres in the astral body, but from the chakras; and the man who is using the one would be the last man in the world to be using the other, which is only wanted, so to speak, on the downward path of the bridge, in order that physical impacts may reach the thinker and give him information. I have never known a case of crystal-gazing which went beyond the possibilities of the lower astral plane. It is true that you can by practice see, but you do it at a serious risk. I strongly advise you not to go largely into crystal-gazing, popular as it is, for although you may gain some small results from it, you will be shutting yourselves out from the higher possibilities.

Turn from that line of evolution to the Raya Yoga system. That starts quite differently. It starts with thought, with a process of meditation; and before that process of meditation, which is the beginning of the Raja Yoga, there is a preliminary course to be followed by the man desiring to practise. He must to a certain extent have purified his physical body, not because he is going to use that body to stimulate the astral, but because, as the powers of the consciousness grow, they will work down on to the physical body, and unless it be prepared to receive their workings it is likely to be injured, and hysteria, diseases of all kinds, breakdown of the physical

health, sometimes even lunacy may result. All these things have been observed and studied in India, and it has been found by practical experience that if a man starts these methods with an unprepared body, while he may get some very remarkable results by the play of the consciousness downwards, he will very soon break up as regards his health, and he will become a nervous wreck. The purification of the body is effected by an elaborate system of food, drink, sleep, and so on, of which the centre note is moderation not starvation, not lying awake so that the nerves are overstrained, but moderation in everything. The kind of food the Raja Yogi takes is to be satvic, a term generally translated "pure", but which I think is better translated as "rhythmic"; that is to say, food in which the vibrations are regular, harmonious, balanced. This is based on their theory of matter having three attributes: one, Inertia, which predominating in the human body, would mean sloth and heaviness, so that foods tending to produce this quality are barred. So also all foods that tend to produce ill-regulated activity, restlessness, in which predominates the second of the attributes of matter, Mobility, are barred. That leaves the foods in which the quality of Rhythm predominates. A whole system relating to the food-stuffs is built up to help in the preparation of the body to vibrate in answer to the higher consciousness when it is wanted.

The next step is the complete mastery of the emotions, so that a man may never be carried away by them. A man must have made some advance along this line before it is thought safe to teach him the methods of Yoga itself. When he has thus partly purified his body, and learned to control his emotions, there comes in the training of the mind, the "great enemy" as they call it; because all the ordinary use of the mind is to run out to the outer world, and that mind is usually regarded as the best which moves most rapidly from one thing to another, which is able to grasp one thing and then turn to another, and so on. Now those qualities are exceedingly hindering when you come to the evolution of the higher consciousness, and the Raja Yogi turns all his efforts to the evolution of this higher consciousness, which demands the quieting of the mind, in order that it may shine forth. So his practice consists partly in the steadying of the mind, which is done by the use of the imagination to a large extent, a mental picture being formed and the attention fixed on it; then withdrawn from all the picture but one point, and fixed upon that; that point finally being dropped so that the mind remains absolutely still. The difficulties here in the West with regard to this method are these: that the mind is more restless than it is in the East, by the line of evolution; and again, that people expect results too rapidly. The first result of trying to fix the mind is to discover that it is much more restless than you thought it was. A mind which thought itself fairly steady is found to be restless and all over the place, when it is ordered to fix itself on a thing which does not attract it. Then, again, you must practise this for years before you get a really satisfactory result, and that is a thing which seems rather long to the hurrying and busy life we find here in the West. If you have done it some lives before, you will do it soon now; but if this is the first life, it will be a weary task, but it is inevitably necessary if you desire to grow along the path that means wisdom, power and service. When the mind has grown fairly steady, so that it can be reduced to quietude and kept there without thinking, then comes the time when the higher consciousness asserts itself, and with that one enters on the real practice of Yoga.

In addition to the fixing and gradual emptying of the mind in this way, there will be considerable practice simply in concentration, keeping the mind on a single thought, not so much now on a mental picture as on an idea, and, as it were, sucking out of that idea everything it has in it, by a curious process in which the idea takes possession of the man. What really happens is that the mental body moulds itself into the form of the idea, so that the idea becomes part of the mental body of the thinker; and when he can do that, those fixed thoughts mould and shape, and create the organs in the mental body necessary for the work which he has to do. When those organs are partially developed, then the thought-power comes down through them on to the astral, and builds there again the organs that it requires. You see you are coming down, along the true line of evolution - the higher builds the lower and this more highly developed consciousness, having shaped the mental body, proceeds to the shaping of the astral; and as the man proceeds with his meditation and

concentration day by day, the thought comes down on to the physical plane, and shapes the brain, also for the expression of the higher powers. And when the thought-currents at last pour down, they find an instrument which is able to vibrate without injury; and in addition to that, the whole of the man's previous thinking has improved the cells of the brain, has enlarged them and made them very much more complex, creating a better instrument both in the organisation of the cells by the whole course of thinking, and by the power of vibrating to the subtler currents when they come down from the higher planes.

Now that is the practice of Raja Yoga put in a general way. Laborious, difficult, demanding a great sacrifice of time and labour, it must become the first thing in life ere one can expect success. But, after all, that is only what is true of every other science. The man who is going to be a really great mathematician must give his life to it; the man who is going to be a great scientist of any kind makes the science in which he chooses to be an expert the one object of his life, bending all his efforts that way; and can you expect the science of the soul, hardest, most complex, and most subtle of all sciences, shall be mastered with less of effort than is given to the ordinary science, which works in the physical plane and by the physical brain? If you think of it, you will see that this only can be the rule of evolution here as elsewhere that the man who would really be a Raja Yogi must make it the object of his life. And as he proceeds in this way, notice the sequence: consciousness unfolding first, and then the organs of the body shaped for its expression. That means that whenever the organ is able to work, the consciousness will be able to understand and master. It means that the man has evolved within, and so will be able to deal with all that meets him on the different planes of existence; and as he enters into one plane after another, he will find that the powers that he requires on that plane are evolved in his consciousness, and that none of the mechanism that has been created by their use goes beyond, in its power of response, the powers of the consciousness to understand. I grant that it is much more difficult than the other plan; but then it takes you somewhere. It really quickens our evolution and makes our lives nobler and grander than otherwise they can possibly be. It is the road of evolution traced by the Divine Will for the whole of humanity; and all that the Raja Yoga does is to quicken evolution; it does not turn aside from it, nor go against it.

Along this line of meditation and of practice it is that the great Teachers of the past have gone. It is the road that They have proved to be safe for human feet to tread. And the prize that lies at the end of the efforts is great beyond all speaking.

I have been talking here all the time of this New Psychology; but the understanding of that is as nothing, is but, as it were, child's play to those who are working for the evolution of these higher and nobler faculties. For there is only one motive that makes the strength, the courage, and perseverance to follow this toilsome road to its end, and that is the will to serve, and to become a channel of the Divine Will in evolution. You may tread part of that way with the desire to serve your separated self; you may find something of courage, endurance, and patience by the prizes of power held out to you along this path. But this also will fail as the difficulties grow greater; for the man who fixes his thoughts on power for the separated self is working against the Divine Will which works for unity, and although he may become splendidly intellectual, although he may develop to a great extent that body which for age after age is not born nor dies, he cannot touch the innermost life of the Spirit, which knows no separation, but lives by unity alone.

Along these paths of unfoldment I have mentioned, you are truly unfolding consciousness and form. But the highest path of all, on which the eyes of those who tread these paths are set, is that spiritual evolution which means the recognition that all lives are one and not separate; that all beings live but in the Self, and the Self in them; that knowledge which is of the highest, in which all are seen as one and not as "others". So that the man who reaches the threshold of the spiritual world sees in that world himself indeed, but himself as part of a common, universal life; realises that all the forms that lie on the lower planes are his so far as his life and his powers are concerned, and that the one particular form that he has been evolving by his struggles and his

labours is in very truth no more his, as a separated thing, than any of the other objects which he sees around him in the universe, whose life is one. So that it is not for him, as his eyes open to the greatness of the spiritual world, to see differences in those around him any more, nor to think of himself as other than they. The criminal in his lowest degradation to him is part of himself, and the form of the criminal is his form as much as his own highly evolved one. It is the glory of such a life that it can share any form, however low, however base or vile, and, pouring part of itself into that form, can raise it a little higher than by its own unaided efforts it could climb. That it is to be a Saviour of the world; to know no difference, to look on the saint and criminal with equal eyes, as both manifestations of the Divine, as much identified with the one as with the other - perhaps even more with the lower than with the higher, because the lower needs aid and effort more than does the higher and the more intelligent. That it is to be a Saviour of the world: to be wise, but only that the wisdom may go out among all the ignorant and make every ignorant man a little wiser because one has known; to go out among the foul and the impure, having gained purity, and make them a little cleaner because one has risen to the heights of purity; to learn, but only to share; to gain, but only to give; to rise to the highest in order to be able to touch most effectively the lowest. For this is true that the higher you climb, the more easily you can touch the lowest; not by stooping down to them, but by feeling your own unity and identity with them. It is the part of the truly spiritual man to feel himself one with the sinner, and to share his own purity with him. That is what is meant by the spiritual life, beyond all intellect and beyond all enveloping form; that is the true glory of Divine manhood; that the reality of the spiritual life. Worthless is all unfoldment, worthless all swift evolution, worthless all development, unless it subserves this one supreme end - to put an end to separateness; to think no more of others as different from one's Self, but to know that the whole universe, inasmuch as it is in its Creator, is also in every life that is one with Him; to know that, as we share the Divine life, we come nearest to every form in the universe; for true is it only of that which is of Spirit: "Closer is he than breathing, nearer than hands and feet."